

COUNTRY LIFE

VOL. XIX.—No. 493.

[REGISTERED AT THE
G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER.]

SATURDAY, JUNE 16th. 1906.

[PRICE SIXPENCE.
BY POST, 6½D.]



H. WALTER BARNETT.

THE DUCHESS OF NORFOLK.

Hyde Park Corner.



THE Journal for all interested in

Country Life and Country Pursuits

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EDITORIAL NOTICE.

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THE COUNTRY NEAR LONDON.

IN the Fortnightly Review for the present month there is an article which deserves more than passing attention. It is written by Mr. J. B. Firth, and is entitled "The Ruin of Middlesex." What the theme is the reader may easily imagine. It is evident that Mr. Firth loves his Middlesex, and has known it well for many years. He sees now that owing to the facilities afforded by electric tramways, motor-omnibuses, and trains, a complete revolution is effected in what once were beautiful rural districts around London. He makes no protest against the employment of these agencies, but, on the contrary, recognises that they are more likely to reduce "the great wen" than is any Act of Parliament that has been, or is likely to be, enacted. His position is rather that the people should be encouraged to leave town as much as possible. Let them by all means have their villas and their gardens in the country. Even if they have to come to business early in the morning and depart from it late at night, still the mere act of sleeping amid the fresh air is more invigorating than staying in the poisoned atmosphere of the great town, while the healthy pursuit of gardening is open to them in such leisure as they happen to possess. But if we read Mr. Firth aright, he seems astounded that the demolition of the country round London should not be conducted with more wisdom and system. Truth to say, anyone who directs his steps to the outer circle of London must come to the conclusion that the jerry-builder has been allowed to run riot. It is not only in near proximity to the town, but thirty or forty miles away from it, that we find him proceeding just as though he were developing an estate at Hornsey or Wood Green. One can very well understand why a man in business should like to have his place in the country that he can reach every night, but that he should leave the town for a terrace seems to be almost incredible. Yet that is how a great deal of building is done. Even where land is comparatively cheap the jerry-builder prefers to set up his houses in a row, with what he calls a long garden at the back and a

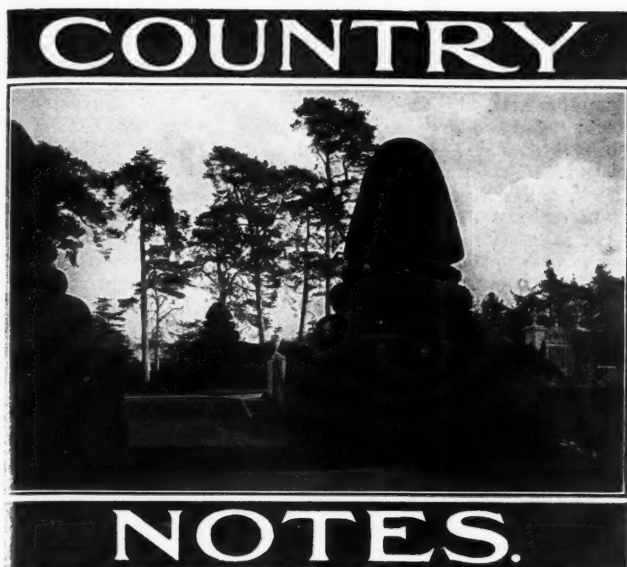
little plot in front. In one word, he reproduces the suburban villa with all its objectionable accessories. In consequence, these newly-developed estates, not only in Middlesex, but even more so in Surrey and Essex, are an eyesore to the traveller. Nor can they afford much comfort or consolation to the unfortunate occupier. He has, so to speak, transported his house and chattels from Clapham Junction to some place outside the radius, which has the disadvantage of being much more difficult to reach. But in all essentials the villa in one row is the same as the villa in another. The garden and the house are overlooked, so that he may not go to plant his cabbages in his shirt sleeves without the curious eyes of his neighbour studying him in this get-up. What is practically a street runs in front of his door, and, altogether, there is in his surroundings no perceptible improvement on what he has left.

Mr. Firth thinks, and we wholly agree with him, that some supervision of the laying out of new estates ought to be exercised by local authority. Examples where this has been done could easily be cited, but public opinion would probably support a more vigorous intervention than any of which we have had experience. Those who develop new estates proceed on lines that are extremely familiar. Their first business is to fell the trees, because they think it impossible to build while they are standing, and in this way alone many lovely places have been reduced to nakedness and vulgarity. Then roads are laid out, and positions marked for the uprearing of villas. Of course it is somewhat difficult to suggest what should be done, although the object to be aimed at is quite easily understood. Even the smallest country house, and by that we mean a cottage, ought to be entirely detached from other buildings, and stand in its own garden or piece of ground. Those whose obstruction is most fatal to this are no doubt the land speculators. No sooner is a new district opened up, or a promise made that it shall be opened up, than certain people begin to purchase land with the object of selling it again when development has sufficiently advanced. In many cases the original purchaser, having had no intention of building himself, sells the land finally either to an individual builder or to a company. Their object again is to construct houses and sell them as quickly as possible to landlords whose idea of purchase is solely to obtain a good interest on their capital. In a sense all this is legitimate business, as we have purposely left out of account the many fraudulent attempts to make money by the way. But it works very badly for the district.

Mr. Firth gives many examples, but we select that of Little Ealing, a once charming hamlet, as he very properly calls it, with fine old brick mansions set in spreading gardens, which is now being destroyed. The said mansions in such a case are always difficult to get rid of, as the rents they formerly commanded are no longer obtainable. So they are turned into institutions of one kind or another, and advertising boards are stuck up saying that the district is "ripe for immediate development." This means that all the beauty of the place is utterly destroyed, that insignificant and abominably ugly little villas start up wherever there is room for them. The policy—if that which is pursued by so many independent methods can be dignified by the name—must be disastrous in more senses than one. The houses that are put up are not well planned, are not well built; so that, in the course of a very few years, they must assume a dilapidated appearance which brings the neighbourhood into disrepute. Whereas, if energetic means were taken to see that only substantial houses were built, and that these were planned with a view to the appearance of the place as a whole, its vogue would endure much longer. Mr. Firth points out that district councils appear to save their consciences for their crimes against the picturesque by securing a patch of grass here and there for the purposes of a public park or recreation ground. But in this they do not look far enough forward. If they were wise they would, while it is still possible, do their utmost to preserve those features which give beauty and attractiveness to a locality. We do not know if at present they have power to insist upon any type of building, or upon a certain amount of ground going with each house; but this might very well be given them. After all, the builder of a house has a certain responsibility. He is not only taking means to acquire his own comfort, or to enrich his own pocket, but he is doing something that will have a lasting effect upon his neighbours. It is by a sort of tacit consent that he obtains a monopoly of the ground on which he builds, and there would be nothing against the constitution or against the liberty of the subject in compelling him to use that with a decent regard to the susceptibilities and practical interest of his fellow-citizens.

Our Portrait Illustration.

OUR frontispiece this week is a portrait of the Duchess of Norfolk. The Duchess is the eldest daughter of Lord Herries, and her marriage to the Duke of Norfolk took place in 1904.



THE King Edward VII. Sanatorium near Midhurst, opened by the King on the 13th, is a fine example of a building that brings together all the results of modern knowledge as applied to a place for the treatment of consumption. An advisory committee, under the chairmanship of Sir William Broadbent, decided upon plans prepared by Mr. Percy Adams, F.R.I.B.A. The site is magnificent—150 acres on Easebourne Hill that formed part of the Cowdray estate until it was purchased for the purposes of this great building from the Earl of Egmont. It lies open to the south and west, while on the north and east it is sheltered by rising ground and a fine old wood of Scotch fir. It is wild forest land of the best character, with plenty of open ground, and yet sufficiently wooded with a mature growth of forest trees, among which birches and oaks preponderate. The building stands at an elevation of nearly 500ft., the long frontage of some 700ft. looking nearly due south to the South Downs, and having beautiful and extensive views.

Considering the position, the dry, sandy soil, the natural beauties of the ground, the mild and genial Sussex climate, and the fine air, it would seem scarcely possible that a building with such an aim could be more desirably placed. The sanatorium is destined for two classes of patients, the more well-to-do paying for their accommodation and treatment. The building is home-like, and yet dignified. On the southern side wide balconies allow of the patients' couches being drawn out into the open air, while below there are covered ambulatories and pleasant bays with sheltered seats, that will be enjoyable winter suntraps. The chapel, which can be reached by a subway, is a most interesting building, and two diagonal wings enclose a sunny space where, in suitable weather, the service can be held in the open. The gardens have been formed with much careful consideration. The ground slopes away to the south, and the lawns and flower gardens, which cover a considerable extent of ground, are terraced in several levels. No less than 9,000yds. of dry walling support the different plateaus. The whole face of the walls has been planted with suitable flowering plants, and in two or three years' time should form one of the most extensive and interesting wall gardens in England. Gentle work in the open air is a part of the projected treatment; such work will be found in a share in the care of the plants on these walls, and of the many clumps and flower borders on the flat. No work could well be pleasanter or more full of daily interest.

In the House of Commons on Monday night, Mr. John Burns, the President of the Local Government Board, gave an assurance that steps would be taken with regard to the effective inspection of foodstuffs sent into this country. Previous to that, Mr. Lloyd-George had given the figures which show the extent of the trade. Annually, it seems, we buy over £2,000,000 worth of tinned goods from the United States, and it is most essential that the public should receive an assurance that the material used in their production should come up to the standard of purity and wholesomeness insisted upon in our home markets. No doubt the disclosures which have been made at Chicago will urge the Government of the United States to take the steps that are necessary. Unless this happens, it is obvious that an important branch of American trade will receive a check in England from which it will take a long time to recover. Already the consumer is beginning to eye suspiciously any dish made out of tinned meat which is placed before him.

Under the circumstances, Mr. W. P. Reeves, writing from the New Zealand Government Offices, is thoroughly entitled to claim for the tinned products of New Zealand that for many years they have been subjected to the careful inspection required. The New Zealand Government, as we had occasion to point out long ago in these columns, has been most solicitous in its reputation for sending only perfectly sound goods to Great Britain. Mr. Reeves tells us, and we can well believe it, that the care taken in this respect has rendered it impossible for New Zealand to compete in prices with America. He gives some interesting particulars of the manner in which the New Zealand Government protects the interests of the public. It is impossible for diseased animals to be slaughtered for food, while all abattoirs and export slaughter-houses at which animals intended for consumption for human food are killed are under the strictest Government supervision. He concludes by assuring the public that the meat they receive from New Zealand arrives under the guarantee of the Government. As we have already hinted, there is nothing in this letter which was not known previously to those who took an interest in the subject, and if the trade from New Zealand increases at the expense of that of Chicago the success will have been well earned.

LAUDABUNT ALII.

Laudabunt alii claram Rhodon
Moenia *bimarisve Corinthi*
HORACE.

Let others laud the common sights
Of some thronged city by the sea,
Its days unquiet and its nights
Alive with routs and blinding lights,
But let there be for me
The fields, the whispering woods, the charm
Of a remote rich pastured farm,
Where I may pass the noontide calm
Under an old elm tree.

For me, secluded shady nooks,
Close bowers of thorn and eglantine,
The cawing of the busy rooks,
The rippling laugh of woodland brooks
That through the bramble shine,
And singing birds with folded wing
To wake me with their carolling.

All these delights be mine.

ARTHUR HUNT.

It is very frequently said that we live in a prosaic age; but the career of the Right Hon. Richard John Seddon, Premier of New Zealand, whose sudden death was announced at the beginning of the week, shows that there is as much romance in the twentieth century as there was in the days of chivalry. The setting for it, however, is very different. Seddon began life more than three-score years ago as a poor Lancashire lad, and, by dint of energy, love of adventure, and natural ability, passed through all the stages of life until he came to be called, between jest and earnest, the King of New Zealand. He once told a friend that the original reason for his going abroad was that his work became irksome, and a restlessness to see new lands seized him. The glamour of the goldfields was upon him, and he went first to seek his fortune in Victoria, on the Bendigo diggings. But luck did not come in his way, and for a livelihood he had to return to engineering on the railroad, working in the locomotive department of the Victorian Railways. Some time after that, however, there was a rush to the goldfields on the East Coast of New Zealand, and Seddon, throwing up his work on the railway, sailed for Hokitika in 1866. He has himself narrated the story of his wild, rough career there, and how it ended at last in brilliant success.

Mr. Seddon was elected a member of the New Zealand Parliament in 1879, and was chosen for the office of Prime Minister in 1893. Since then he has performed the very difficult feat of holding his office through five general elections, and it certainly was not by means of being all things to all men. He held the most decided opinions upon every question that came up, and it was one of his axioms that it is always better to act definitely even on a wrong course than to vacillate between two opinions and not to act at all. The message sent by King Edward VII. to his widow puts a finger upon the most important point in Mr. Seddon's career. In the message he is described as one of "the statesmen who have most zealously aided in fostering the sentiment of kinship on which the unity of the Empire depends." In the largest sense of the word Mr. Seddon was an Imperial patriot, and no one who has even glanced at his career can doubt that the well-being of the Empire was ever one of the things that lay nearest to his heart. He pursued his object with a breezy, good-tempered energy that won for him the liking both of friends and opponents.

At the last meeting of the British Ornithologists Club Mr. M. J. Nicoll gave a most interesting account of the zoological results accomplished during his cruise in the capacity of naturalist on board the Earl of Crawford's yacht the *Valhalla*. No less than 500 skins of birds, besides mammals and fishes, were brought back, many of them being of rare species. But Mr. Nicoll is no mere collector, as the extracts from his note-books prove. One curious fact resulted from his exploration of South Trinidad, inasmuch as he tells us that no land-birds exist there, though sea-birds, and mice, were found in plenty. Storms and cyclones made landing impossible in many islands it was proposed to explore, and during one of these gales they had the misfortune to run ashore at Assumption Island, remaining fast for twenty-four hours.

Mr. E. E. B. Meade Waldo, who accompanied Lord Crawford, also gave an interesting account of the birds, especially with regard to the jackass-penguins on Dassen Island, these birds being met with in "rookeries" of millions. Here, too, were found enormous colonies of cormorants, whose nurseries were systematically despoiled by small colonies of the sacred ibis, these birds being accused of killing numbers of young by abstracting their intestines. As the cormorant colonies are carefully nursed for the sake of the guano they produce, the ibis was looked upon with great disfavour. But they are sufficiently cunning to choose the very centre of the cormorant host for their settlement; hence they cannot be approached, owing to the fact that this would cause the cormorants to leave their eggs, and thereby expose them to the attacks of troops of gulls ever on the watch for such morsels. The eggs of the penguins are shipped in tons to Cape Town, a fact which seems to call for some control, inasmuch as no colony, however large, can long stand the strain which such a systematic robbery entails. And since Dassen Island forms the main breeding colony of this interesting bird, all care should be taken to prevent its extermination. The collections made during the cruise have, we may remark, been generously presented by Lord Crawford to the British Museum.

It would appear that German chemists are in the way of finding the solution to a problem that has often troubled us in England. This is the transport of fish. It need not be said that for eating purposes fish is never so good as it is just after it has come out of the water. The question the German chemists have been trying to settle is, why these creatures die so soon when removed from their native element. With that end in view they have been concentrating their attention on the breathing apparatus, with the result of making the discovery that a fish remains alive in the air as long as the gills are damp. It obtains oxygen from the air through the medium of the water spread through the fine membrane of the gills. The invention based on this discovery appears to have the merit of simplicity. It consists of a number of damp cloths saturated with water and placed over the fish so as to keep the atmosphere moist. The gills thus remain damp, and oxygen is supplied to them in a pure state from a holder outside the box. In this way fish have been kept alive for between three and four days, so that if the plan is workable their transport becomes a very easy matter.

Mr. Noel T. Kershaw has very succinctly placed before the House of Commons the difficulty of providing cottages for the rural districts of England. He says they cannot be erected at a cost of less than £200 each, and the rents obtainable would not represent a fair return on this outlay. Alderman Thompson, who is chairman of the National Housing Reform Council, supplemented this by saying that for every £100 expended on building, 3s. 6d. a week rent was required by those who let the cottages, so that a £200 cottage ought to have a letting value of 7s. a week. This sum the agricultural labourer, at all events, cannot afford to pay. All the same, one cannot sympathise much with Alderman Thompson's argument in favour of "standardising various parts of a cottage." It means that a fixed and rigid type would have to be adopted, and would perpetuate ugliness and inconvenience to an extent even greater than did the notorious building bye-laws. At the same time, he pointed out what is a well-known weakness of the position. It is the presence of builders on the building committees. In his own town, said Alderman Thompson, the chairman of the building committee was a builder who had to pass his own plans, and the last time he enquired every builder on the council was on the committee. Such an arrangement must, indeed, make it hard for the building inspector to perform his duty. It is, at all events, a matter for congratulation that the committee is clearing the ground so as to ascertain the true facts. It will be for a statesman to deal with them afterwards, and there are many things to be taken into consideration besides cheapness in the provision of dwelling-houses for labouring men.

Not much public notice is taken of the fact, but private letters from San Francisco and its neighbourhood inform us that

the earth in that region is only settling down gradually after its great and disastrous upheaval, and that small shocks continue to be felt from time to time, very trying to the strained nerves of those who suffered in the great calamity. In a letter from San José, of date May 21st, which is before us as we write, our correspondent says: "We had quite a sharp shock on Sunday last. It did us no real damage—only knocked down a little of the loose plaster." Presumably this refers to plaster loosened by the big shock, and not yet repaired; but, though these repeated shocks do no real material damage, it can be well understood how they must intensify the anxiety of the situation. Fortunately, there seems no reason to apprehend that anything like the big shock will be repeated. After the earthquake which wrought so much destruction over such a large stretch of Northern India, there was a series of subsequent oscillations, gradually decreasing in violence, but there was no repetition of the big disaster.

The same correspondent writes that "Californians are naturally very indignant with the Eastern and European papers for asserting that the Chinese were less well treated than the Europeans after the earthquake. There is no truth whatever in the statement that they were neglected. Their wants differ from those of Europeans, and they were put into camps by themselves as soon as sufficient organisation was established. These camps, like the Europeans' camps, were moved several times as the fire advanced, and the Celestials did not like this. It is true a party of looters broke into China town, but as soon as time could be given to it by the authorities the looters were evicted."

GORSE.

Kissing's out of season when the bloom is off the gorse,
Hey the bonny proverb on a golden hill in June,
Rhoda picking buttercups and Ronald on his horse,
Riding up the roadway to the merry morning tune.

Here's the hill aflame now with its garland gold and red,
Here's the hot air sweet now with its lavish languid scent,
Here's the keep of kissing and here's youth with banner spread,
Riding up the roadway to the heart of his content.

Kissing never cares a deal for thorns upon its way,
Hey the silken blossoms and the gorgeous summer sun,
What if maids grow cold again or lovers ride away?
Here's the hundred thousand more shall do as they have done.

Kissing's out of season when the bloom is off the gorse,
Hey the bonny proverb on a golden hill in June,
Rhoda picking buttercups and Ronald on his horse,
Riding up the roadway to the merry morning tune.

H. H. BASHFORD.

Farmers and agriculturists are suffering doubly at present from the combined results of the mild winter and the severe spring. The mild winter was very favourable to all insect-life and to everything that hibernated in the ground. In consequence there is more than the normal supply of insect-life of all, or at least of most, kinds. On the other hand, one result of the very cold spring was that many of the insect-eating birds did not hatch out as large families as they are accustomed to do. It is especially when the young birds are asking for soft succulent food that the parents are so useful in picking up caterpillars and other larvæ and worms of all kinds. This spring, in consequence of the small avine families, the demand for larvæ has not been so great as usual, but the supply has been abnormally large. The agriculturist has to pay the penalty.

Generally speaking, those who drive in horse-drawn carriages do not find much occasion to bless the motorist, but there is an exception in the case of those who enjoy what of country life London has to offer them by driving in the Park on an evening. In the old days, before the motor possessed the land, and before so many possessed motors, the crowd of carriages in the season used to be so excessive in Hyde Park that progress was very slow. Now, between the limits of the "close time" for motors in the Park, the carriages are able to circulate as they please. These are comparatively very few, because so many people have given up their horses and taken to motors instead.

We have not often begun a cricket season with grounds all the country over in as fine condition as they were this year. The autumn and winter were all in favour of those who had the care of turf, and the keepers both of golf greens and cricket grounds have only themselves to thank if the ground is not in good order, and carrying a good growth of grass. Only those who left their grass sowing till the spring will have suffered heavily for letting the time slip by when they ought to have been at work. Hayward of Surrey is, undoubtedly, the man who has shown his gratitude for the good wickets in the most practical manner.

A WALK IN JUNE.

I AM still so unfashionable as to prefer walking to any of the new means of locomotion, and feel tempted to describe in as simple a manner as possible a stroll through English scenery on foot in what has been most rightly called the merry month. It began in the morning when the sun was just beginning to shine languidly from one of those grey skies which foretell a beautiful day. The birds, always early awake, were singing brightly, the cuckoo did not seem to have lost his note as he usually does this month, and the nightingales, which had been curiously silent during the last fortnight in May, had now resumed their song. The surrounding country had assumed that vivid green which belongs to early summer, and gave an impression of growing grass and growing corn, of trees thick with foliage, and of flowers that still retained some of the brightness of early spring. The beginning of the journey was in a lonely part of the country and on the King's highway, and where it led between two rows of tall and unkempt hawthorn hedges that presented a beautiful appearance. They were clothed in white blossoms that were not fully out, and yet filled the air with fragrance. Passing between

weeds instead of into the water. The young, though they had attained a considerable size and were by no means new born, to my surprise, were not able to run fast, and were easily captured, though they fought with the vigour that only young wild carnivora possess. I would have liked to have seen them at an older stage, because young weasels are particularly active and graceful in their habits. They are also as full of play as kittens, and no doubt would form highly agreeable pets, were it not for an evil characteristic that is too well known to need description. It appears that in Nature the enmities of life are somewhat similar to those in politics. The same creatures that pursue one another to death when in want of food live amicably together at other times. Quite near to this family of weasels tiny young rabbits could be seen feeding outside the parent burrow, or when they were alarmed raising themselves on their hind legs and making exquisite little pictures with their fore paws hanging in the air and their ears cocked. The path through the wood, I may mention, is close to the hedge, which never quite shuts out the view of the grass fields; and a little further along I saw four



C. H. Smith.

WOODLAND FLOWERS.

Copyright

them for more than a mile, I came out at last on a common where the broom lay like waves of red gold, and the gorse had not yet lost its colour, but added a tint of bronze to the prevalent hue. A wild road, without fence on either side, led through this till it brought me to a wicket-gate leading into an old wood. There is a touch of solemnity about trees, both at the beginning and at the end of the day; and this was in no way injured by the long morning shadows that fell on the grass and flowers among open spaces of the underwood. An advantage of the early morning is that the timid wild things of the woodland, which hide invisible during the day, are still astir. One of the most curious seen on this occasion was a weasel with three young cubs that had ventured out from the plantation into the grass that adjoined it. She was evidently giving them a first lesson in hunting, but unfortunately took fright and fled into the nettles and weeds that grew beside the plantation fence. Placing myself between her and her family, it was amusing to notice her manoeuvres. She ran along among the nettles, and then, standing up on her hind legs, peered to see what the stranger was doing. When disturbed she changed her quarters with great rapidity, and was quickly seen looking up from a point at some distance, behaving exactly as a water-bird does under similar circumstances, only diving into the

rabbits, as it appeared, going to ground where there was no burrow, and on approaching the spot saw what apparently had been the doe's 'stop' into which they had disappeared. It was only about 6ft. in length, and never at any great distance from the surface, so that by inserting a switch it was easy to ascertain their exact location, and, by digging down as a badger does, to find them, the mouth of the hole having been previously stopped with a cloth cap. Needless to say, the little tender things were restored to liberty, while once again the traveller returned to the flowery path of the woodland, still keeping along the edge of it, for in the centre there is little of interest, except that which comes from silence and shadow and gloom. At this season of the year few wild creatures inhabit the depth of the wood, and no great number of wild flowers grow there. It is along the edge that one continuously finds objects of interest. Here the birds love to nest in the hawthorn hedge, feeding as they do in the field, and being accustomed to retire to the wood as sanctuary. Many four-footed creatures, too, love the boundary between woodland and the arable fields. I saw a hedgehog trotting gently along just outside the bank of nettles, but looked in vain for the piglings that apparently ought to have been with her. Perhaps they were

concealed at the time, for, unfortunately, terror had seized her, too, not to such an extent as to make her curl up, but causing her to hide among the rank herbage. As a matter of fact, this is the most difficult season for watching wild creatures, because the growing grass, the corn, and undergrowth of every description afford them so much concealment. The only advantage is that if one sees them at all they are at their ease, whereas

when the fields have been cleared only a glimpse is to be obtained as they scuttle away to a place of refuge. Exit from the wood is by means of a stile and a small wooden bridge, which crosses a tiny brook that for some distance runs down the margin of the plantation. From the field a stranger could not tell that there was a brook, because even so early as at this season of the year its course is overgrown with waterweeds and sedges.

Looking down one can see the clear water rippling gently round their stems, but the country is almost flat, and the flow of the stream so slow as to be noiseless. The charm of running water is one that always exercises a great influence over me, and I could not help walking for some distance by the stream. On its banks the most conspicuous flower is the blue speedwell, always to be found in the same spots, as though year by year it propagated itself by seed. The general effect is exactly the same as that produced by massing in a well-ordered garden, and no doubt it was from such natural growths as these that the gardeners originally



C. H. Smith.

BUTTER BUR.

Copyright

obtained their idea. The flags have not yet begun to flower, but one can see their buds forming, and in a little while they will open their yellow blossoms to the sun. Birds are very fond of the brook. One can see the clear little pools, with a miniature sandy shore, where the doves and the finches come to drink, and when the weather is very hot, they bathe and flap the water about them. In the water herbage there are runs, just as there are among grass; but while the latter are made by rabbits, the former show the tracks of the moorhens, of one of which the tail is now and then visible, as its owner half swims, half runs into hiding.

Where a little willow gently bent over the stream I found the circular, well-formed nest of this bird. The eggs were probably just ready to be hatched, because the old bird sat very close, and seeing no reason for disturbing her I passed on my way. One wonders how her young are allowed to appear, because the banks of the stream are mined by the water-voles, and even in the daytime a plunge can be heard as they jump into the water and run along the bottom to the hole which is their refuge. They are, as a rule, harmless and vegetarian in their habits; but as there are very few wild animals that do not continue to like eggs when once they have learned the taste of them, it is difficult to assign a good reason for the immunity which the nest of the water-hen seems to enjoy. We are quite away from



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WHERE THE WOODLANDERS DRINK.

"COUNTRY LIFE"

the track now, and, following the hedgerow, come to a corner of the field where stands a pool of still water. Green corn is growing all around it, and the banks are not puddled by the feet of cows or sheep coming to drink, so that it seems entirely devoted to myriads of insects that fly and hum over its surface, or breed

white with buttercups and daisies. Now the midday sun is beginning to make its heat felt, and although the birds keep up their clamour of music, the human wanderer of these fields is glad to creep into shadow and repose. Even there, however, it is impossible to keep away altogether from signs that proclaim



THE HAUNT OF COOT AND MOORHEN.

either in the water itself or in its immediate vicinity. To the man with the microscope unending amusement resides in this quiet pond, so full is it of creatures infinitesimally small. But to-day, not being bent on minute observation, I pass quietly on my way along a foot road half hidden by the corn that waves on either side, over another stile, and through a meadow yellow and

the arrival of summer. Richard Jefferies, in a very beautiful passage, has told us how to him the summer day never was silent; and he did not refer only to the singing of birds or the humming of bees, but to that faint sound, as vague and indefinable as the waft of an insect's wing, that never is wholly absent from a summer day. With it there is a fragrance, not of the sweet



C. H. Smith.

NATURAL COVER.

Copyright.

briar, not of the hawthorn, not of the clover, nor of the bean blossom, but a perfume independent of these that belongs to and is associated with the rising sap and the opening leaf.

EXPERIMENTAL SMALL HOLDINGS IN NORFOLK.

THAT small holdings may succeed on fertile loam land is generally conceded, and on the "grand land of the Lincolnshire Fens," to quote Earl Carrington, it has

been demonstrated beyond all question that suitable farms can be subdivided and additional small holdings created with success from the points of view of both landlord and tenant. Is success possible on less suitable land, on lighter soils, in districts where small holdings do not exist and are not naturally evolved, and where sport exercises an influence on agriculture? It is clear that in such counties there are special difficulties to be faced, not the least being the lack of "heart" or ambition in the remnant of a still-shrinking agricultural population, the hardest and thriftiest of whom have left the soil for the towns and the Colonies.

Emboldened by their success in South Lincolnshire on Earl Carrington's estate, Mr. R. Winfrey, M.P., and his friends formed the Norfolk Small Holdings Association, and set to work to test the possibility of creating small holdings on the lighter soils of Norfolk and in districts within the county not specially favourable to the enterprise. The choice of the neighbourhood in each case was determined not by way of response to any expressed demand for land by the resident population, but by certain farms of average quality coming into the open market at the time the association was formed. Each farm was bought at a public auction: one farm is situated near the market town of Swaffham, another about a mile and a-half from the straggling little town of Watton, and the third is near the village of Whissonsett, between Fakenham and East Dereham. The estate comprises 339 acres, three small farmhouses with sets of buildings, and five cottages.

The total cost of the estate—purchase price, conveyance, enfranchisement, and adapting



Miss M. Best.

COW-PARSLEY.

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it for small holdings—was £8,759 11s. 6d. The gross rents in 1905 amounted to £482 3s. Out of that sum the association paid in respect of tithe, landlord's rates, taxes, drainage, and insurance, £93 18s. 4d.; in repairs and renewals, £25 9s. 7d.; other expenses, £12 12s. 7d.; reducing the gross rent to £350 2s. 6d. net, representing a return of 4 per cent. upon the capital outlay. The land was conveyed to individual members of the association, and the undertaking was financed by members' subscriptions—about £250 each—and by mortgaging the freehold. The rent of the land varies from 17s. 6d. to 27s. 6d. per acre, the tenants paying the usual rates.

The provision of houses and buildings, in addition to the houses and cottages on the estate, has not involved much outlay, as the great majority of the tenants live apart from the land. All that has been required in this way has been the building of a new house, costing £300, two small barns for storing barley, etc., and a neat set of buildings, comprising barn, stable, cowshed, calf place, and implement hovel, built of creosoted wood and roofed with lock-jointed creosoted boards. The cost of this set of buildings was £72 10s., including the spouting, concrete flooring for stable and sheds, and a well for the liquid manure. A formidable difficulty was, however, experienced at Whissonsett,

district. In one case, Whissonsett, the farm is situated six miles from a market or railway, and near a sleepy village clustered round a gaping gravel-pit—a village which, during the life of the present generation, has shrunk in population by one-third, and in which the writer himself saw nearly a score of cottages unlet and falling into decay. The small holdings have been created five years—not long enough, perhaps, to be considered beyond the experimental stage, but long enough to enable one to draw conclusions. Not a single penny has been lost in rent during the five years, and in connection with the fifty or sixty holdings and eight houses, three notices to quit only have been given. From this point of view, therefore, the record must be considered satisfactory. Two questions go to the root of the small holdings problem where the land is not of the best or the situation favourable: Is there a tendency in the course of time for the holdings to amalgamate and the land to get back again into a single large holding? On such light soils as those of Norfolk can land be kept in good heart year after year without sheep, a class of stock which the average small holder does not, as a rule, entertain? What has this association to say in reply? At Watton, the number of original tenants has shrunk by one only—he quitted a single



Miss E. Shiffner.

AN ENGLISH MEADOW.

Copyright

where, owing to the demand for the forty-two acres of grass land, it was found necessary to divide it into fifteen lots, the tenants preferring to pay a small additional rent to liquidate the cost of fencing (£150) rather than attempt to occupy the grass land in common, to which suggestion many objections were advanced. Creosoted post and strand wire fencing was used, being found much cheaper than any other of equal durability. Barbed wire was banned in deference to the Mid-Norfolk Hunt. The total length of fencing is a mile and a-half. On the whole it has answered, although trouble has been caused by the roving disposition of some of the curious stock which small holders keep, especially if they tuck a little dealing in store cattle or horse-flesh on to their ordinary business of farming. Again, if A grazes his pasture land, and B, adjoining him, lays his plot in for hay, A's stock purloin about two feet of B's herbage the whole length of the fence. But these fencing troubles are not peculiar to small holding farms, and the association adopts the general rule that every tenant must look after his own stock.

It will be noted that there are no large manufacturing towns supplying good markets near either of the farms, and no market gardening or special industry is connected with the holdings; the tenants follow, as a rule, the ordinary rotation farming of the

field to take a larger holding, and as this field was away at the back of the farm, the resident tenant absorbed it. At Swaffham, the tendency has distinctly been towards amalgamation; on the other hand, at Whissonsett, a typical "deserted village," the tendency has been in the opposite direction—the same number of tenants (eighteen) remain, but several applications have come in since the farm was cut up; indeed, another farm, the same size, could readily and advantageously be let. The explanation is that there is not a single acre of grass land on the Swaffham farm, whereas at Whissonsett two-fifths of the land is pasture. It would appear that when land is not adapted for market gardening or fruit cultivation, either on the ground of soil or ready access to markets, the successful cultivation of land in small holdings depends upon cow-keeping and the breeding and rearing of young stock which rapidly grow into money with care and good feeding, and provide the essential fold-yard manure for the straw and root crops. At the same time, it should be stated that those plots of land at Swaffham which did not answer the purpose of the original occupiers were eagerly taken up by more enterprising tenants, and there has been no loss in the transition. The association, in desiring to give an opportunity to every man who asked for land, learned the lesson that discrimination must

be exercised in the choice of tenants, and that even when reasonable care is taken, a tenant, here and there, will not come up to expectation, and may even prove a total failure.

Turning to the question of manuring and treading down the lighter soils with sheep, at a recent tenants' rent audit this matter was talked out round the table. The general opinion was that while folding sheep was most desirable, and was carried out by some of the tenants by arrangement with neighbouring farmers, good fold-yard manure was sufficient to keep the land in good heart. That the standard of cultivation is fairly maintained is proved by the facts that one 3-acre holder marketed 23 coombs of oats from $1\frac{1}{4}$ acres of land; that another tenant, rented at £1 per acre, delivered 194 coombs from 10 acres; while the tenant of the largest holding and the poorest land grew $11\frac{1}{2}$ coombs of barley per acre over a stretch of 20 acres.

The enterprise illustrates the value of co-operative credit for small holders, a branch of the work of the Agricultural Organisation Society in which its president, Mr. R. A. Yerburch, takes the keenest interest. At Whissonsett a duly registered credit bank has grown out of a provident small holdings club,

receiving subscriptions at the rate of 2d. per week. The capital fund has reached £25, and now this is all loaned to members for reproductive purposes. One has borrowed to buy a heifer, another a breeding sow, a third seed corn, etc. A committee of five tenants manages the affairs of this credit bank, but it must be confessed that the members have been lucky in securing as treasurer and hon. secretary a local gentleman, a man of business and integrity. The success of such institutions depends almost entirely upon the presence at their head of some local leader and organiser, and the difficulty in many villages would be in finding the right man to take the matter up.

On the whole, the Norfolk experiment must be regarded as a success, and Mr. Winfrey and his friends are satisfied that they have proved that in the Eastern Counties, notwithstanding a diminished population on the land, and the shortage of capital among those who are left, there are still numbers of men in the villages and on the farms available for small holdings—men with a practical knowledge of farming and some capital, who would, if they had the opportunity, make a living and rear families on the land.

J. H. D.

WEAVERS AT HASLEMERE.

IN days gone by England had a silk-weaving industry of which she was justly proud. In the quaint old Spitalfields houses of that date the shuttles sped back and forth all day long, while the jar of the hand-loom filled the air, and beautiful silken fabrics grew under the weaver's skilled hand. In Spitalfields now a hand-loom or two may still be found, but as often as not it stands idle, and the handful of silk-weavers still left there get scarcely enough work to do to enable them to drag out a dispirited existence. Why this sad falling off? Has the English hand lost its cunning in the craft? Clearly not. For away in sunny Haslemere, whose red-roofed houses climb in straggling streets among the Surrey Hills, a transplanted offshoot of it flourishes bravely. Art, stepping in, made her own of the dying handicraft and breathed fresh life into it. Beauty of colour and design, added to the old skill, have once more made a silk-weaving industry essentially national in its expression.

About three years ago an artist, Mr. Edmund Hunter, founded the handicraft at Haslemere, his aim being to apply artistic feeling to the designing and execution of the work. He brought some of the Spitalfields weavers down to Haslemere, established them in a quaint "weaving-house" on a hillside, and



WINDING SILK FROM A SKEIN.

gave them beautiful designs to weave. Some of the results may be seen to-day in the marvellous hand-woven silk dresses delighting the public in "Nero," on the stage of His Majesty's Theatre. Perhaps, in exquisite and subtle mingling of colour, nothing the St. Edmundsbury weavers have yet produced has equalled these fabrics. The tints of the silk warps themselves are as pure and rich as the hues of gems, and they are combined, graded, and arranged with a delicate sense of colour producing a magnificent effect. The shimmer of summer seas, the ripple of a breeze over fields of ripe corn, the sweep of clouds across a purple mountain-side—all these are suggested by the indefinable shading of these beautiful stuffs. So skilfully are the shades of each chosen colour intermingled that the fabric seems to melt from sea blue to moonlight sheen, or from orange to amber, under one's gaze. Another characteristic feature of the work is the artistic use of metal threads in enriching material. It appears in "Nero" in gorgeous robes of cloth of gold and of silver tissue, in which the pliancy of the fabric is very noteworthy, but is chiefly used for ecclesiastical work. An altar frontal for Bangor Cathedral, woven in deep purple, has the "Vineyard" design in aluminium thread; and gold threads are interwoven with red silk in a frontal



AN ALTAR FRONTAL IN THE MAKING.

ordered by Queen Alexandra for Buckingham Palace Chapel. Copper threads are also employed with fine effect, and a strikingly rich piece of ecclesiastical material has the three metals cunningly combined in its design, their mingling hues being admirably thrown up by the silken groundwork.

There is a picturesqueness about hand-loom weaving which appeals to one's artistic sense as no machinery can. The weaving-house in which the St. Edmundsbury craftsmen work is a pleasant place, all sunlight and splashes of colour, with a medley of wooden frames and bars overhead, and a cheerful jarring in the air. Upstairs, where the threads are prepared for the looms, one sees the silk and wool, just come from the dyer, lying in great skeins of lovely colours. Then it is wound on bobbins, and when it has been reeled round and round a big circular stand in lengths of 50yds. it has become of the same degree of fineness throughout, and is thenceforth called the warp. In a corner are some shelves, which are really the artist's palette. Here are huge reels of silk, blues, purples, reds, greens, yellows; each colour graded through tones of glorious hue from its fullest shade to its palest. A feast of jewel-like beauty are these shelves; for it is especially in marvellous colour that the Haslemere work excels. The fabrics made here have an extraordinary quality, a sort of bloom, very beautiful and distinctive, which is partly caused by the shooting of one thread over the other. The silk used, one should note, is of the best and purest quality. Some of the materials made are a mixture of silk and wool, also very lovely, and wool alone is used for carpet-making and some of the stuffs.



HAND-WOVEN SILK BROCADE.

For ecclesiastical fabrics of all sorts the Haslemere industry seems to be especially suited. The richness of texture and colour obtained by hand-loom weaving produces the right effect in material, while Mr. Hunter's appreciation of symbolism and instinct for true art express themselves in noble and dignified designs. Altar frontals for Windsor Castle Chapel and St. Paul's Cathedral; magnificent silken stuffs for vestments; offertory bags of purple silken damask worked with a design in aluminium thread—these are examples of the work done at Haslemere in church art. At exhibitions of various kinds the St. Edmundsbury weavers have won admiration and rewards, several medals falling to them at the St. Louis Exposition, where a French journalist so much admired their work that he wrote a highly-appreciative article upon it for "Le Monde Industriel."

In comparing hand-loom weaving with the work of the power-loom, it is easily seen that the results of the former are much more beautiful than those of the latter. Greater brilliancy of texture and more beauty of effect are obtained by the hand-loom, and in addition the construction of the fabric is found to be better. For coarser work the power-loom gains in being less expensive; but with regard to silk-weaving that advantage is lost, for it is less costly to weave a short length of silk in a hand-loom, while for longer pieces the cost is practically the same. As far as artistic value goes the hand-loom is far preferable. Individuality in design and execution is not lost in it as in the other. And looking at the two looms from the point of view of the weaver, one sees how much better the old style was. The introduction of the power-loom turned the weaver, who was an artist in his

own way, happy in his work, and ennobled by it, into a mere attendant on a machine. In the Haslemere handicraft, art inspires and guides the work, and the skill of the weaver responds to the creative impulse of the artist.

Perhaps enough has been said to give some idea of the beautiful productions of this English handicraft. On the subject of the weavers themselves one is tempted to enlarge somewhat.

This little colony of workers—artists every one, inasmuch as they all, from the master-brain at their head downwards, delight in their work—seems to offer one solution of problems vital to the nation. Its founder's hope is, as the industry grows, to bring down all that are left of the old silk-weavers of Spitalfields, and to take in yet more of the young people in danger of drifting away to the great cities, until the Haslemere craft becomes, like one of the mediæval guilds of handicraft, a centre of art and of busy happy life. That ideal is as yet in the lap of the future. Half-a-dozen weavers and six or eight looms at present constitute the colony. But if the industry continues to expand as it is doing, one may some day see a cluster of cottages spring up round the weaving-house, each representing a family



FILLING SPOOL WITH ALUMINIUM THREAD.



A SILK LOOM.

either brought "back to the land," or saved from deserting it. The establishment of industries such as this supplies answers to many of the questions continually cropping up nowadays. How to keep the people from leaving the country and drifting into the cities; how to prevent the resulting deterioration of physique and character; how to make life in the country interesting for the people once they have been brought back to it—all these problems a handicraft solves to some extent. The Haslemere weavers who have been brought from Spitalfields

delight in the country, and the desire of the companions they have left in London is to join them there. Their own lives benefit enormously from every point of view by the change. To some extent national health and morality benefit by it also.

And the nation as a whole profits by the production of such beautiful artistic work as this of Mr. Hunter and his weavers, which proves that England is still, if given fair play, capable of turning out hand-woven silk fabrics equal, if not superior, to those of any other nation.

JOSEPHINE BULLEN.

CARAVANS AND CARAVANNING.



W. Muir.

EN ROUTE IN DUMFRIESSHIRE.

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IT is remarkable how rapidly, within the last few years, the practice of caravanning has come into favour with the holiday-maker. One may come upon a caravan now, in almost any part of the British Isles, wherever roads are good, and country worth exploring; and yet I remember well, not ten years ago, when this new form of conveyance was

a problem and puzzle to all who met with it. In every little village where I halted I found a gaping crowd completely at a loss to understand the phenomenon. My caravan was taken for a furniture-moving van; for the advance guard of a circus; on one occasion for a prison van! Folks could by no means understand that I was really travelling for pleasure with the thing.



W. Muir.

ENCAMPED NEAR A BURN.

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Some spoke of it vaguely as a "living van": some referred sagely to gipsies. Nor was this state of bewilderment confined to the bucolic mind. My insurance broker, with whom I took out a fire policy to cover it, described it therein, to my great amusement, as a "Pleasure travelling Caravan, or Land-yacht."

But this charming method of travel has made great strides since then, as it was bound to do, for caravanning offers an ideal holiday, providing rest and change, unlimited fresh air — a complete freedom from restraint. Nor is it expensive; with no railway fares, no tips, no hotel bills to consider, one can well afford, without extravagance, to live like a prince in a caravan. Indeed, it offers so many advantages, and is in reality so simple a matter, that I believe many more people would give it a trial, beyond those who already practise it, if they only knew the way to set about it. It is very apt to be regarded either as a glorified form of camping out or as an eccentric imitation of the gipsy. But the caravanner has to contend with none of the hardships of living under canvas. He may make his house as comfortable, within its small scope, as anyone need wish. He may cook inside in a well-appointed kitchen, eat on a snow-white table-



W. Muir.

ALL READY FOR THE NIGHT.

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cloth, sit on solid cane-bottomed chairs, and at night he may sleep soundly in an honest bed, with an American spring mattress beneath him. So he need have no fear of wind or weather.

Again, one must not form an estimate of this new way of life from a study of the gipsy. Considering the number of centuries he has spent in developing the resources of a caravan, it always seems to me that the gipsy has made poor work of it; but his ideas of sanitation are not our ideas,

and he is seldom a believer in the fresh-air cure. Speaking generally, the typical gipsy caravan is all that a caravan should not be. It is small and stuffy, heavy for its size, often loaded with ornaments, or cornices, or I know not what wooden erections. One has even seen them carrying gorgeous figure-heads, like ships. And naturally one asks, why in the world should the horse be condemned to drag all that? One cannot eat, use, or sleep in a figure-head. For a close study of the question has made it clear to me that the first great principle of caravan construction is the importance of mobility. It is not only gipsies who lose sight of this. One of our large carriage companies recently built several very handsome, expensive, and beautifully



W. Muir.

CROSSING A LOWLAND PASS.

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W. Muir.

IN THE ESK VALLEY.

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equipped caravans. I had the pleasure of meeting one of these when I was myself campaigning in North Wales. It was a good deal smaller than my van, exquisitely appointed, and luxuriously furnished; but three horses drew it painfully at a walk, and it gave me a certain malicious pleasure when I left my friends to gather up the reins, put my one horse to a trot, and depart round a bend at a good ten miles to the hour. It will easily be seen that the saving in expense and inconvenience made by only taking one horse is well worth consideration. One of the caravans I have referred to weighed over $2\frac{1}{2}$ tons, but my experience has been that 25cwt. should be an outside weight; and I have one caravan, which comfortably accommodates four persons, with a weight of not more than a ton. Everything about it should be light.

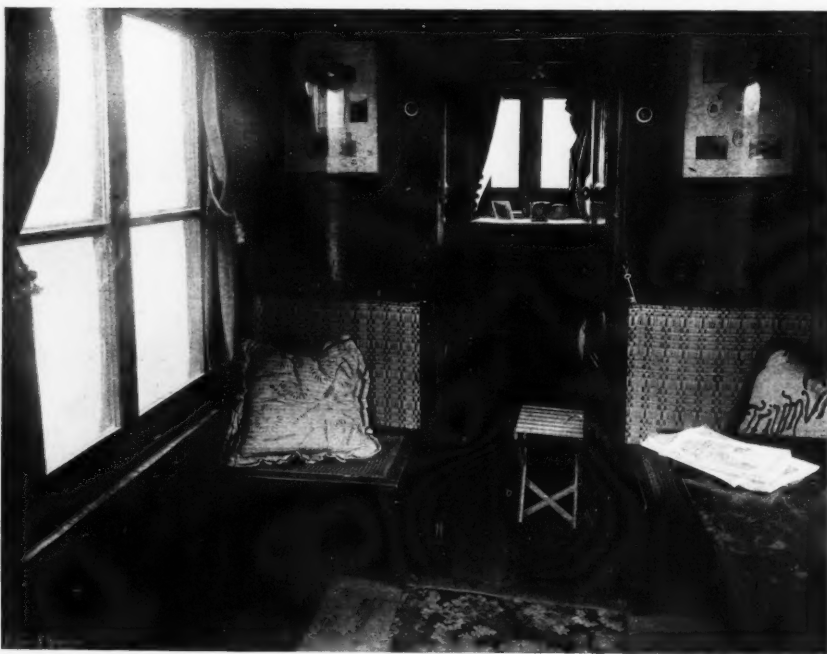
The caravan in the illustrations is an excellent model. It is built of large wooden panels, only half an inch thick, with a roof of Willesden canvas, beds of only a few pounds' weight each, furniture throughout as light as it can be made with safety. And the result is that although it is 18ft. in length, and stands 10ft. from the ground, it has on one occasion made the remarkable journey of forty-five miles in one day with one horse. Good carriage springs are a prime necessity, and a strong brake and "slipper" for really dangerous hills. But 18ft. is in reality too long. In my later caravans, I have considerably reduced the length, for in narrow lanes, and where gates are not too wide, it is a difficult problem to get off the road at night. Beneath the floor is the larder, stove-box, and a box for buckets, pots, and pans. The larder of perforated zinc, hidden away out of the sun, and with a breeze passing through it all day, as the van moves on, is one of those minor excellencies in which a caravan is

superior to a stationary dwelling. The windows must be large and close fitting. They should all open and shut, for when the sun is hot upon the roof, a through draught is sometimes a necessity.

Turning to the interior construction, we find plenty of scope for individual taste. It is well to have the cooking end, or kitchen, surrounded by movable panels and divided by a curtain from the rest of the house; so that on a fine night one cooks, with the panels removed, practically in the open air, and the preparatory smells and savours do not float into the dining-room. In my caravans this open end serves also "a double debt to pay." It is there, sitting in deck-chairs, that one drives the horse, when the road is hard and level, or down hill; for it must be understood that, as a rule, the caravanner walks, and spares his horse. The remainder of the inside must be cunningly devised so that every inch of space is used to the utmost advantage; the beds one above another against the wall, tables and chairs to shut down, here a corner cupboard in the roof, and there a little book-case, and writing-board suspended on a hook. An india-rubber bath is an excellent thing, as are also canvas "camp" wash-stands. The great principle is to have everything light, and everything, as far as possible, collapsible.

And when, having satisfied the demands of utility, one turns to artistic considerations, it will be found no difficult task to make the house look smart and dainty. We have no room, it is true, for pictures, statues, or bric-a-brac; but much can be done with curtains and cushions. A carefully-selected carpet, and bright matting on the walls, and many little odds and ends, may be added to give the whole an air of finished comfort.

Lighting is the final problem. No caravan is really complete without electric light; but, after using it for some years,



W. Muir.

SITTING AND BEDROOM.

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have had to give it up in mine. I found that I was getting too ambitious; and it was much more trouble than it was worth. Candles are good enough for me. And so, if it be rightly undertaken, caravanning is no very desperate adventure. You may take the road, and wander where you will with "all the comforts

of a home" (as the advertisements say) hourly at your beck and call. Keep, as far as may be, to good roads. Treat your horse well; and do not be too heroic in striving to make records; and I think you will come to agree with me that this is indeed the way to travel.
B. S.

CONCERNING CUCKOOS' EGGS.

OPINIONS differ widely as to the resemblance between the eggs of the cuckoo and those of the dupes upon whom they are foisted. According to some, this resemblance is more imaginary than real, and even if it can be shown to exist, is the result of accident. Others tend to rush to the other extreme, and would have us believe that resemblance is the rule and not the exception. The truth, however, would appear to lie somewhere halfway between these estimates, judging from a large series of exceedingly careful measurements and statistics which Mr. Oswald H. Latter of Charterhouse, has for some time been engaged upon. In the last number of *Bionitrika* he makes a second contribution to this subject, which should be carefully digested by all who are interested in this problem. He deals with the question of colour, as well as of size, with a thoroughness that leaves nothing to be desired, and supplements these observations with an interesting summary of the essential features of the problem. This summary forms an instructive commentary on the surmises of earlier writers, some of which read strangely to-day. Thus, it has been contended that the cuckoo, having laid her egg, and noted the colour thereof, sought a nest containing similarly coloured eggs wherein she might deposit it! As an alternative, this bird of lax morals was supposed to pay a round of "house to house" visitations, for the purpose of discovering the number and nature of available nurseries, and after this to determine the colour of the egg she was about to lay to suit those in the nest she had selected! Dr. Rey, a German naturalist, propounded yet another hypothesis to account for the coloration of cuckoo eggs. According to him, this is to be attributed to the nature of the food of the nestling. Cuckoos reared in nests of red-backed shrikes or wagtails, for example, would, when they came to lay eggs, produce shells of the same general character as those of their foster-parents; on the principle of what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander. In the end, the correct reading of the riddle would appear to be that of the "Natural Selectionist," and the first to enunciate this was Professor Newton. We have long believed this, and



Miss R. Ramsden. CUCKOO JUST FLEDGED. Copyright.

descendants are remote, as, on the terms of the theory, it will seek the nests of the foster-parents which reared it in which to lay its eggs, and every egg will be laid, therefore, in the wrong nest! The fact that hedge-sparrow-cuckoos' eggs rarely resemble those of their foster-parents is possibly due, Professor Newton suggests, to the fact that the hedge-sparrow is not gifted with a nice sense of discrimination in the matter of size and colour, and the same applies to a few similar cases.

That cuckoos return each year to the same locality, and that each female lays the same type of egg throughout its life are now well-known facts. Mr. Latter's study of this question seems to

show conclusively that there is a selective process at work, tending to bring the eggs of these birds into agreement with those of the host both in size and colour. His observations on wren-cuckoos' eggs are important in this connection. The absence of colour matching is significant, for, as he points out, this is of no importance, as neither wren nor cuckoo, from the construction of the nest, can see the eggs—hence the absence of colour selection—but in the matter of size the case is different.



Miss R. Ramsden.

IN A HEDGE-SPARROW'S NEST.

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In this particular the eggs of wren-cuckoos differ from those of all other cuckoos, and approach those of the wren, a species which is, he remarks, "peculiarly intolerant of interference with her nest—at any rate, at the hands of human beings." Again, he remarks, "the accuracy with which highly-remarkable cuckoos' eggs are deposited in appropriate clutches is so striking as to tempt one to dally with conscious selection and deliberate choice on the part of the female cuckoo; for instance of six blue cuckoos' eggs . . . three were in redstarts' nests, one in the nest of *Saxicola melanoleuca*, and two others in the nests of a hedge-sparrow and a pied-flycatcher. All these birds lay blue eggs, and so far as my observations go, blue cuckoo's eggs are not deposited elsewhere. . . . Again, the eggs of the Orphean-warbler are a very distinct type, and yet, in six cases out of seven the cuckoo's egg deposited in the nest of this species resembles this type to a nicety, nor is this particular variety of cuckoo's egg to be found in any other nest."

Finally, and most remarkable of all, we must suppose that this peculiar evolution of cuckoo *gentes*, or cuckoo clans, is a dominant characteristic transmitted in the female line exclusively, for, if otherwise, the tendency would be swamped by intercrossing with males of other clans; inasmuch as only by rare chance would sexes of the same clan succeed in pairing together.

RURAL LIFE IN NORMANDY.

THE architectural beauties of Normandy are almost beyond compare, and these many hundreds of people visit each year, losing themselves in admiration of graceful spire and fretted cathedral aisle. But there is another phase of life from that of cities, which is to a great extent overlooked, and of which it is, indeed, difficult to obtain a glimpse when whirled by in a railway carriage, or spinning along full-speed on a bicycle—the modes of travel chosen by the greater number of tourists. It requires leisure to gather any idea of the simple life of the agricultural people, and it is best learned by taking a quiet drive or walk along the broad highway, or, better still, by following the sinuous course of a by-road, or else, and this is for foot passengers only, strolling along the paths cut through the fields, where in harvest one may watch the men bending to the sickle, the women tying up the sheaves, or else, accompanied by their little grand-



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children—since this is work only for the elderly and the very young—picking up the stray ears of corn; gleaning, in fact, as did Ruth of old amid the reapers near Bethlehem; as did our own poor derelicts in the more open-handed days of our fathers.

There was given in this paper of February 24th a picture of the plough of our Saxon ancestors. Even such a plough is that used in Normandy to this day, with its shaft moving on a wheeled framework. Possibly there may be found in remote parts of England a plough similar to this. That most acute of observers, and most charming of writers on rural subjects, the late Richard Jefferies, mentions having seen it in use on the South Downs several years ago, and says that "the wheel plough having grown up, as it were, out of the soil, fulfils the conditions of handiness," one of which is that the share can be raised or lowered at will for light or deep ploughing. But if to be seen in this country, the implement may almost be regarded as "a scarce and high-prized curiosity," whilst it is a common object in the fields of Normandy.

One reads in fiction of the smiling, rosy, happy milkmaid of England; but, as a rule, I fear her place has been more or less usurped by the less picturesque but stronger, and probably more efficient, yokel. Not so amongst our Norman neighbours, where, often mounted on a donkey, which is hung round with vessels of shining brass, the milkmaid sets off for the fields at earliest dawn; there, unsundered and calm, "the milky mothers" yield their store, peacefully chewing their cud meanwhile. All the vessels filled, the milkmaid hangs them again round patient Neddy, and trudges home, sometimes a long distance off, by his side. He thought nothing of her weight on the outward journey, but it is different now that the pails are full to overflowing.

Then how primitive is the manner of making cider in the open streets, which are generally narrow enough as it is, so that the great scarlet slicing-machine fills up half their width. It is a very picturesque scene, what with the colour of the machine,

the great glowing masses of red and yellow apples, and the deep blue of the workers' blouses. No threshing-machines invade Normandy, at least, the Normandy I know best; that is to say, Calvados and the adjoining departments, and there in autumn you may see men, armed with the old-fashioned flail, busily engaged in separating the grain from the ear, on threshing-floors constructed in the open fields. There is something delightful and patriarchal about it all; no rush nor whizz of machinery, no smoke nor unpleasant odour, and there are quaint pictures to be



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"COUNTRY LIFE."

seen as the ploughman wends his homeward way, leading his great Norman horses, or "the lean, brown-throated reapers pass, like silhouettes against the sky."

The workman's wages may be small, the profits of his own

little patch of land insignificant; but they supply his simple daily needs, which, as we know, are much less than those of the same class in this country, since a Frenchwoman is generally a notable housewife, and can make a little go a long way. True, in both appearance and character the Norman is in many things more akin to him of English than of French birth, but in thrift he (or she) is all French. In that part of Normandy known as the Bocage, life is conducted on the very simplest lines. There

the peasant, winter or summer, rises at daybreak, sometimes before it, and after a slender *petit déjeuner*, goes out to field or farmyard till between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m., when the *grand déjeuner* takes place. Then another few hours of toil, and dinner at the rather primitive hour of noon, probably consisting of soup *bouilli*, cheese, coarse bread, and vegetables. Ah! it is only on the other side of the English Channel that we taste vegetables cooked to perfection! Then comes a short *siesta*, and work again till four or five, when the toiler comes back for supper, and soon seeks his well-earned rest. No need of a curfew bell in the Bocage! In these peasant homes there are no luxuries, you may be sure;

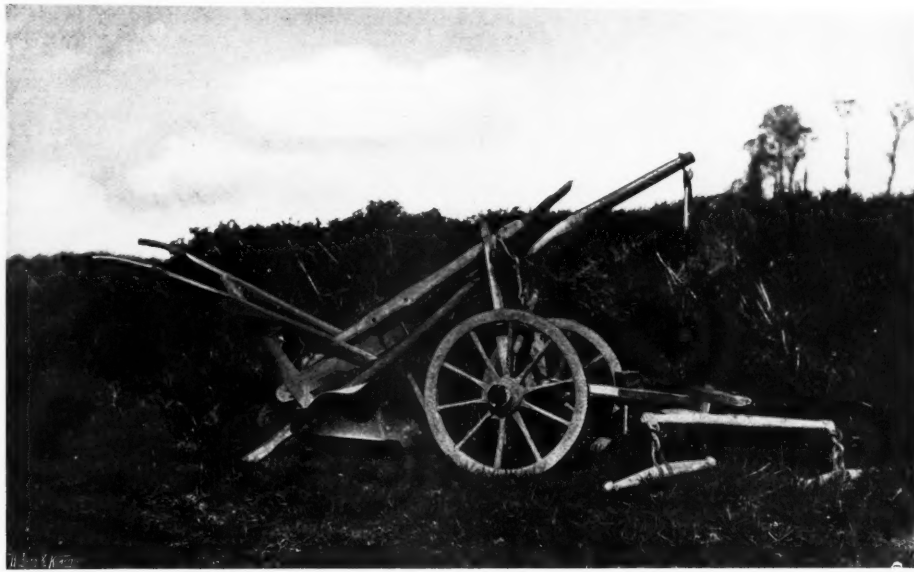
not even plates, these being cut into the kitchen table itself, and having a bung-hole at the bottom. Into these depressions Marie or Jeanne ladles out soup, or *bouilli*, and Jean or Pierre eats thereof heartily and without adverse comment. The meal being

finished, a bucket of water is sluiced over the table, the bungs are taken out, and so the plates are washed and ready for the next meal.

There is one want in a rural landscape in Normandy—indeed, in every part of France. I allude to the absence of bird-life. Near Tinchebrai, indeed, I once counted twenty magpies in a field together; but this is a rare sight, the farmer having the strongest antipathy to anything with bill and wings, with the exception

of the homely barndoor fowl, remembering all the crimes committed by the birds of the air—the grain rifled, the fruit pilfered—and forgetting that the same beak which is accountable for these misdemeanours has rid his fields of insect pests, slugs, and worms; not all of the latter, happily, since, as Darwin showed us, a certain number are absolutely necessary for the lightening and pulverising of the soil. So he wages war to the knife against all feathered wild creatures, and without birds a country landscape loses half its charm, and, as Richard Jefferies says, "even the grandest plantation is a vacancy."

MARY F. A. TENCH.



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THE PLOUGH OF THE COUNTRY.

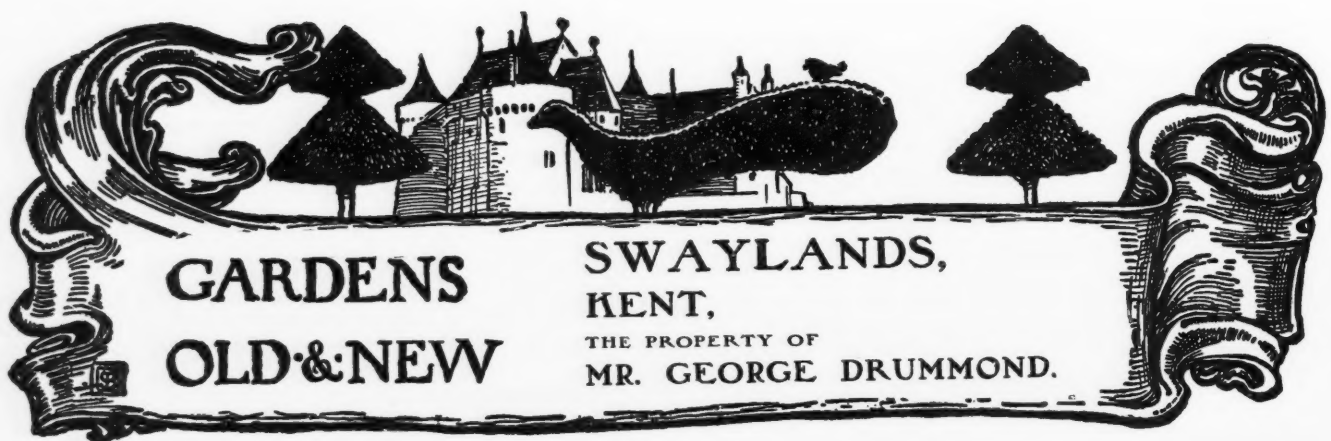
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THE WATER SUPPLY OF THE PEASANT.

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PLACED amidst beautiful scenery, which at this joyous season is clothed with the flowers and tender green of early summer, is the residence of Mr. George Drummond. It is near to the hamlet of Penshurst, and is approached from this or Tonbridge by lanes that run over hill and through dale, with here and there rose-covered cottages set in apple orchards pink with bloom. It was a glorious May day when we visited Swaylands, which, as the illustrations suggest, possesses one uncommon feature, a rock garden of vast extent, and massed over with the brilliant flowers of late spring. The house is on a hilltop, with acres of oak and beech as a setting, and the ground slopes naturally to the valley, with rising hills in the distance, where the forest of Ashdown can be clearly seen. We mention this, as during the past twenty years Mr. Drummond, with the great help of Hosier, his gardener, has been transforming this wooded slope into a garden of rare charm and picturesque beauty. This has been accomplished by the formation of four terraces, the upper one by a lime tree walk, then the second terrace and the third flanked by borders of old-world flowers, with the fourth as a support to the cricket ground. Beside the rock garden a grateful feature is the grass—broad luxuriant lawns which lead up to the trees and flowers about them, with no jarring gravel walks to disturb the sense of

repose which these cool sweeps convey; it is a simple English garden, and a garden in which Art has not struggled with Nature.

It has been the praiseworthy object of those who have made this beautiful garden to save every tree of value, and carve out of this woodland hilltop a garden which is only a setting to the natural surroundings. The terracing is a triumph of landscape gardening, and at no one point is the whole of the flower-garden visible. A walk by the gnarled apple orchard, with a thousand daffodils fluttering underneath the flower-covered boughs, leads one to the most beautiful view of the rock garden. There is an indication of flower beauty to come, as through the interlacing of tree branch a splash of purple from the clouds of aubrietia or rills of yellow alyssum break in on the view, until across the pond the front of the rock garden stands out in all its flower-decked beauty. This is a picture that will live in memory. Huge natural stones, many of them nine tons in weight, support the garden behind, and by the margin of the water runs a sheltered walk with hardy flowers in profusion reflected in the surface. It is a pure delight to sit here in the sun, surrounded with these flower masses, and look across to the misty Sussex hills in the far distance.

The rock garden is not a mere garden of rocks, but is relieved with a wealth of yew and gorse, which fills the air with





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FLOWER-FRANGED STEPS IN THE ROCK GARDEN.

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THE POND.

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its almond-like fragrance. It is riddled with little ways with no irritating *cul de sacs*, and flowers clasp the stones in profusion, the little sandwort from Corsica, with its myriads of twinkling little blooms spreading, as a moss, over the surfaces, and in the little rocky pathways. One path may lead through a passage of moss-covered stones to emerge into another flowery path whence a peep, perhaps, may be seen of the distant hills. There

is colour everywhere. The gorse is golden with bloom, the copper beech and maple glint in the warm sun, and the thorns, gnarled with age, are burdened with blossom. Not a tree or shrub that possessed interest and beauty has been destroyed in the making of this rock garden, and it is a pleasure to see the devices effected to preserve the natural charm of the surroundings. The result is a rock garden in which the colours of the flowers

gain in intensity, and seem to make the rocks aglow with yellow, purple, and the many shades which the best choice of spring-flowering plants is able to render.

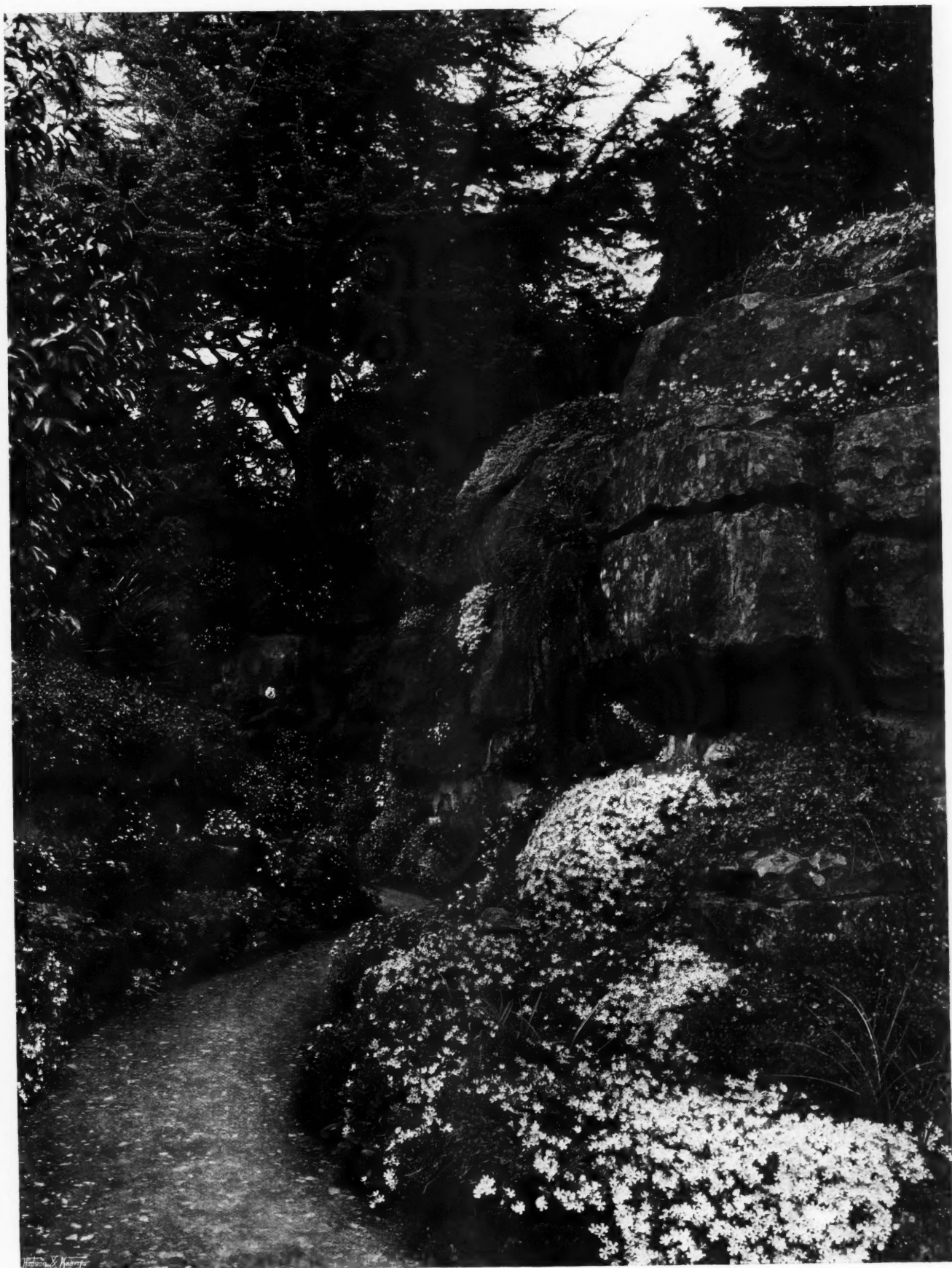
Alyssum and aubrietia are the strong colour notes in late spring and early summer, and the streams and carpets of blossom seem little upset by the winds and frosts of the past few weeks. A cleft in the rock, or a bringing together of rocks to form a chasm, is made into a stream of flowers meeting at its foot a massing of alpine phlox. Falling over the face of one boulder is the grey-leaved *Gypsophila prostrata*, which we have never seen in finer growth, and the alpine phloxes are everywhere, not in dribbles, but large groups, and in great variety. The pale lilac of Newry's seedling is seen at the foot of a moss-stained boulder, with the wiry shoots of *Cotoneaster microphylla* almost kissing the frail flowers in another place *P. stellaris* and *P. grandiflora*, *P. atropurpurea*, a deep crimson in colouring; and a seedling raised by the gardener which, we think, is worthy of a distinct



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A CORNER IN THE ROCK GARDEN.

"COUNTRY LIFE,"



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BY FLOWERY PATH.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

name for the clearness and strength of its lilac shade; and Vivid, the brightest perhaps of the family.

Many days might be spent in this rock garden of pleasant surprises and concealed paths without acquiring a full knowledge of the uncommon alpine in nook and cranny. Peering over a ledge one sees a drift of flowers from the tiarella, and in the distance the solitary flower-spikes of the *Saxifraga peltata* from the streams of California. *Heberlea rhodopensis* is happy in the shade and moisture of a quiet little corner, and rambling hither and thither, rejoicing in the sense of freedom such a garden gives, we discovered a colony of the native lady's slipper, the now almost extinct *Cypripedium Calceolus*. But the greatest surprise of all was the famous *Ostrowskia magnifica* perched on a ledge exposed to the sun, and in the driest of soils. We have always been told to regard this as a moisture-loving plant, but in the Swaylands rock garden it is in an absolutely dry soil, with strong stems crowned with fat flower-buds. It is never watered, and never fails to bloom. The white flowers of *Arenaria montana* seem whiter than usual on this sunny May day, and the flood of colour from the barberries stronger and richer, but in the presence of arabis, alyssum, and



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A SUNNY WALK.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

aubrietia all else seems in the shade. Though the rock garden is the centre of beauty in this charming place, it is not the



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IN THE OLD APPLE ORCHARD.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

only feature worthy of remark. The collection of trees and shrubs comprises many of the most recent introductions, the double cherry, J. H. Veitch, having its burden of rosy flowers at the time of our visit, and the golden yews are among the most beautiful, when the young shoots assume their characteristic colour in the county, soil and position bringing this to perfection.

It is, as we have indicated, a garden of a true artist. The blue of the clematis clouds over the "May" trees in the high summer days, and over the old apple trees the rose flings its fragrant garlands, while by the water side bamboos and a host of shrubs and flowers which love the coolness of such a place flourish amazingly. This luxuriance of growth is good to see. Nothing is more depressing to the earnest gardener than an ill-conditioned growth, but here Nature lends a helping hand to bring other than the wild tree and shrub life to a robust maturity.

One leaves this rock garden with the pleasurable feeling that it is free from restraint, natural, and a home for flowers from the mountain plains of Europe and over the seas. The illustrations show the character of these clinging masses of blossom, but they must be seen in their wealth of colouring for their effect amidst the budding leaves to be realised. As a well-known writer says: "Alpine plants possess the charm of endless variety, and include things widely different: tiny orchids, tree-like moss, and ferns that peep from crevices of alpine cliffs, often so small that they seem to cling to the rocks for shelter, not daring to throw forth their fronds into airy grace: bulbous plants, from lilies to blue-bells; evergreen shrubs, perfect in leaf and blossom and fruit, yet so small that a finger glass would make a house for them; dwarfed creeping plants, spreading over the brows of rocks, draping them with lovely colour; rockfoils and stone-crops no bigger than mosses, and, like them, mantling the earth with green carpets in winter, and embrace nearly every type of the plant-life of northern lands."

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ARABIS AND ALYSSUM.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

IN THE GARDEN.

WILD FERNS FROM SEED.

THERE is much alarm among those who love our beautiful flora that certain kinds will be extinguished through the depredations of hawkers and those to whom British flower life is something to gather and throw away, or attempt to grow under impossible conditions. Ferns especially are threatened with partial extinction, and as a well-known writer pointed out some time ago, of all our native plants none are more readily coveted by the ordinary tourist. Now one of the most interesting of garden operations is the raising of Ferns from spores (seeds). To collect the spores is a simple matter. A few envelopes, to contain separate fragments of fronds in fruit of any kind

which may please our fancy, will furnish all needful preparation. An inexperienced eye will not find it hard to judge whether the sori at the back of the fronds are ripe and fit. In some kinds, when ready, they are of a bright golden brown; in others so dark as to be almost black. Taken in the right condition, as they are almost sure to be in autumn, these, if rightly treated, will give a vast deal of pleasure, and may lay the foundation of a life-long interest. To raise Ferns is not difficult, but it requires patience. Some well-crooked pots, with a layer of moss laid over the broken sherds to keep the drainage free, some finely-sifted sandy loam and leaf-mould, or peat, mixed with small fragments of stones, some saucers for the pots to stand in, to be filled now and then with water, to give just sufficient dampness to the soil, and some squares of glass to place over the rim of the pots will constitute all the garden ground that is requisite, and space for these small needs may generally be found even in a London lodging. A Warden case of the simplest construction is, of course, a boon, but it is a luxury that may be dispensed with for hardy Ferns. The brown powder which we find staining the inside of the folded packet we have so carefully brought home must be dusted thinly on the surface of the damp soil and covered with glass, and in due time,

with care and patience, and gradual potting of the young Ferns as they require it, we shall reap our reward. The *Osmunda* that we came upon suddenly in some marshy Devon wood; Parsley Fern from the Lake District, perhaps, though that is difficult, and would be a triumph of skill; pale fronds of the brittle Bladder Fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*) from a Yorkshire haunt; quaint scaly *Ceterach* from Somersetshire dykes—how pleasant to think that we have enriched ourselves with all these memories of delightful holidays gone by, without having robbed one single spot of even a solitary root of its choice local treasures!

PLANTING THE HOLLY.

No tree or shrub plays a more important part in the winter landscape than the Holly, though we cannot spare one of our native evergreens from either hill or dale. In no other country does it thrive as it does with us, and for that reason, if for no other, we should make it a main feature in our English landscape, encouraging it in those localities where it is naturally abundant, and planting it and cherishing it elsewhere. Those who are thinking of any new planting of trees and shrubs in garden, coppice, or hedge, might do well to think over the

good qualities of the Holly before going further afield for a choice. In this hurrying age we cannot wait for anything that seems to loiter, and perhaps it is partly for this reason that Holly is not planted as it used to be; but partly also, it may be, that our minds are led astray by the innumerable foreign trees and shrubs, which are now within our reach, and clamour for space in such planting ground as may have fallen to our lot. As a specimen, on a wide lawn, with branches feathering to the ground, few things can exceed the fine symmetry of the finest green-leaved Hollies, though amongst the host of garden varieties which have been raised, many of them most beautiful in their variegation, there is abundance of choice to satisfy the most exacting taste. We all love the glowing berries which help to light up the winter day, but the creamy foam of Holly flowers in spring scarcely ever receives its due measure of praise. May is the best month to plant. The finest varieties are as follows: Shepherdii, platyphylla, Wilsoni, Gold Queen, Silver Queen, Handsworth New Silver (a beautiful silver Holly), compacta aurea, camelliaefolia, Hendersonii, handsworthensis, maderiensis, and argentea marginata. The best six are Shepherdii, Gold Queen, Handsworth New Silver, platyphylla,

camelliaefolia, and compacta aurea. The finest collection of Hollies is in the nursery of Messrs. Fisher, Son, and Sibray, Handsworth, Sheffield.

PANSIES AT THE TEMPLE SHOW.

One of the prettiest features at the recent Temple Show of the Royal Horticultural Society consisted of the self Pansies, or Violas as they are also called, shown by Mr. G. H. Crane, Woodview Terrace, Archway Road, Highgate. This is a most important race, and many of the most beautiful varieties in cultivation have been raised at Highgate. The flowers are remarkable for the diversity of their colouring, the predominant shades being yellow, blue, lavender, cream, rose, and many intermediate tints, all of either strong self tones or delightful misty tints, which associate well with Roses and hardy plants. A great point is to mass each sort to obtain a rich and pleasant effect, and when a quantity is planted the flowers may be gathered for the house—to fill small bowls, for which they are well adapted.

RANDOM NOTES.

Veronica spicata.—A charming plant in flower now is this Veronica. It is not showy, but a group is a study in grey colouring. Closer observation shows that a few bluish lilac lines radiate from the centre. The spikes are thick with these little blooms, and when the blue-flowered *Veronica rupestris* nestles at the foot the contrast is noteworthy.

Maggots in Phlox Shoots.—Last year we warned growers of the herbaceous Phlox that unless the tips of the shoots of this plant were closely



THE WHITE ROCK CRESS AT SWAYLANDS.

examined a little greenish maggot would spoil all prospects of a wealth of flowering. It is the same this year. The Phloxes are badly infested, and we have spent many hours carefully picking out the insidious marauder. Only hand picking is availing. It is useless to apply insecticides, as these cannot reach the maggot ensconced in the shoot.

Origin of the Bunch Primroses.—The following note should interest lovers of the Primrose, especially the Bunch-flowered form: "Of the Bunch Primroses, which come into bloom later than the true Primroses on single stalks, some of the best strains in cultivation are from the patient labour of amateurs. Of these the one cultivated at Munstead Wood is among the finest. This strain is kept exclusively to whites and yellows. Some of the prettiest varieties are of a pure white colour with pale lemon eye, while among the warmer whites are flowers with large eyes of so deep an orange colour that it seems to approach scarlet. There are some of better colour, almost without eye, and others—among which are some of the most beautiful and refined—whose colour is pale citron and canary throughout; among numbers of other shades of yellow, including self-colours in deeper canary shades. Some of the later developments among the deep yellows show much strength, thickness, and purity of colour; strong, deep yellows of many qualities with or without a distinct eye. There are indications that a flower of deep orange colour all over may be expected within a few years' selection; in fact, the desired colouring has already been obtained, but the size of the flower is not yet satisfactory. The individual

blooms of the strain generally are 1½ in. across, but a number have reached 2 in. Size, however, has not been so much considered, as that the plant should be a good plant all round—a beautiful thing in a garden; and the old florists' distinction of pin-eye or thrum-eye is entirely disregarded. It has nothing to do with garden merit. The strain has been improved, not by hand fertilisation, but by selection, some thousands of seedlings being grown every year, and seed selected from the most promising. This careful selection of the most desirable forms has shown a steady advance year by year. These Bunch Primroses show a wide variety not only in colour but also in habit of growth, in form of flower, in size and tinting of the eye, and in several other points. So great a variety, in fact, that, when the raiser thought of grouping the flowers into classes, when sixty classes had been made, the size was abandoned—now they are merely broadly classed as white and yellows. As to the main varieties of form some flowers are smooth and flat, some are much imbricated, with the petals so wide that when these are a little waved, the flower has a double appearance. Some have the edge notched, some notched and frilled, some have green stalks, some reddish, while others are nearly purple. There is one curiously noticeable fact about the colouring of these white and yellow Bunch Primroses. It is that although their earliest ancestor was undoubtedly the wild Primrose of our woods, with its pale yellow colouring inclining to a greenish tint, yet among the seedlings and later developments just that shade of yellow is the one that rarely occurs."

A Japanese Quince to Note.—The Japanese Quince is *Cydonia japonica*. It is to be seen flowering even in January in a sunny corner against many a cottage wall, and is welcome in the best-kept shrubbery; but a variety in bloom now in Lord Aldenham's interesting garden at Elstree is little known. Its name is *C. j. sinica*, and is one of the richest in colour of all flowering shoots. The flowers appear in clusters of from three to six, and individually have firm and broad petals of rich crimson colouring, which seem to shine in the spring sun. The Japanese Quinces possess much value for filling bowls in the house, as both the flowers and growth are as picturesque when cut for indoor decoration as on the plant.

PLANTS POISONOUS TO FARM STOCK.

THE death of several cattle lately in the South of Ireland from eating the water-hemlock brings again home to us the fact that there are quite a number of shrubs and other plants which, if eaten, even in small quantity, are highly injurious to farm stock generally. Every now and again cases crop up in which horses, cattle, and sheep die somewhat mysteriously, on examination generally proving that the cause lay in the poisonous weeds which were present in the pasture they partook of. Very often, too, these cases are not recorded, so that in conjunction with such as gain publicity in the public press the numbers annually must in the aggregate be very considerable. The writer having for a number of years kept a record of such deaths, with a list of the plants that were found in the intestines of the dead animals, these notes may be of interest.

The common yew (*Toxus baccata*). This tree is probably responsible for a larger number of deaths amongst farm stock than all other plants combined. It would be needless to enumerate instances in which horses, cattle, sheep, etc., have been killed by browsing on the twigs of the yew. When in a half-withered condition, such as prunings a few days removed, the effects are far more deadly, which should be a warning to everyone who has yew trees on his grounds that the annual trimmings must not be left within the reach of stock, the safest plan being to collect and burn them immediately they are removed. Yew trees which overhang the fences of pasture lands should be pruned back to a safe distance to obviate the browsing of stock.

The common rhododendron (*R. ponticum*). On a large estate in Carnarvonshire, North Wales, seven sheep were killed by eating the leaves of the rhododendron, which was proved by an examination of the animals after death. They certainly partook of a considerable quantity, and death followed quickly. This was a case about which there could be no doubt, as apart from an examination of the intestines, several of the sheep were found dead in the rhododendron grove to which inadvertently they had gained admission, and where the slipped shrubs showed plainly the tracks of the animals. Goats have died after eating the leaves of rhododendron cinnabarinum.

The water dropwort (*Enonthe crocata*). I have a record of a large number of cases in which farm stock have been killed by browsing on this occupant of dampish pasture grounds. Horses, especially, would seem to suffer, and that, too, when other farm stock were present in the field at the same time. This stout perennial, which in appearance somewhat resembles celery, with tuberous dahlia-like roots, grows in situations such as are suited for the wild celery by the banks of streams and lakes, or in low-lying, damp ground. It attains a height of sometimes five feet, with pinnate leaves, and large umbels of flowers. The juice of both stem and roots becomes of a deep yellow on exposure to the air. The flowers are pale yellow, or yellowish white. The only feasible remedy is to uproot the plant in pastures and lands to which farm stock have access, or, as the plant is rarely partaken of when fully matured, the young, tender

growths should be kept cut or stock removed from the pastures until such time as the weed is fully developed.

The cawbone or water-hemlock (*Cicuta virosa*). This stout branched perennial, which is an occupant of damp, low-lying lands and water margins, has proved fatal to farm stock when partaken of even in small quantity. The flowers are white, the leaves pinnate, and the stem hollow, and attains a height of from three to four feet. The strong, disagreeable odour given out by this plant when fully developed causes it to be avoided by farm stock at that stage of growth, but when in a young state it is often partaken of.

The fool's parsley (*Æthusa cynapium*) has not only proved fatal to animals, but to man as well, when eaten in mistake for the real parsley which it casually resembles. It is only of annual duration, with bright green deeply-divided leaves and

white flowers, every part emitting a nauseous smell when bruised. Being extremely common in waste lands and by roadsides, the fool's parsley is well known. The common hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) and the darnel lolium (*L. temulentum*) have both been found injurious to farm stock, the former being plentifully distributed, though the latter is rare. I have only one authentic instance of poisoning by eating the laburnum, and one of the common laurel.

Oakmast.—Three instances have come under my notice of cattle being killed by eating fresh acorns, in one case in Bedfordshire five dying within a few hours. No doubt an immoderate quantity is highly injurious, but taken in limited numbers there are no evil effects. After stormy weather, when the acorns have fallen in quantity, they should be swept up and removed before cattle are admitted to the pasture. A. B. W.

THE IRISH WOLFHOUND.

FOR dogs, as for men, it is an unjust world. From potentate to scullion, from bloodhound to toy terrier, few of us enjoy fair play. Every single cur, canine or human, gets more, or less, than he deserves. Conspicuous among those of us whose merits exceed our reward stands the Irish wolfhound. Kindly, fair-minded, brave,

and faithful, with a charm of manner that matches his moral worth, this splendid dog surely deserves a popularity he too often fails to win. To begin with, he is Irish, a distinction that may neither be analysed nor denied. Then he is big and powerful, so that where might is right he never fails of his own. Good tempered and "nice spoken," in a planet where snapping and snarling are the fashion, he is yet in time of need a man of war. Contented with his lot, which, according to the butcher's bill, is not a light one, incapable of that nightly whining at fate that infects dogs and enrages humans, sedate as behoves the great-hearted descendant of an ancient and aristocratic breed, he is none the less modest with his owner, dignified with strangers, gentle to children, and implacable with tramps. Companionable, demonstrative, beautiful in person, a subtle philosopher, and gifted with a conscience that neither deserts nor encumbers him, the Irish wolfhound, from the true dog-lover's point of view, is, or should be, hard to beat. Goldsmith, it will be remembered, appreciates "the great Irish wolf-dog," whom he considers the king of hounds, speaking of him



T. Fall.

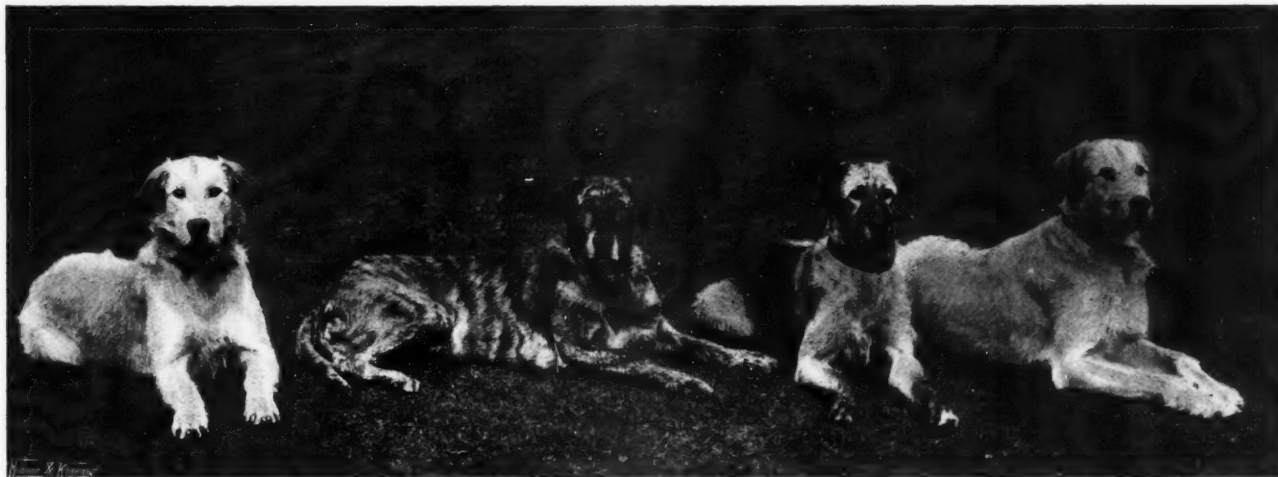
"GOOD TEMPERED, NICE SPOKEN."

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in 1770 as "extremely beautiful and majestic in appearance, being the greatest of the dog-kind to be seen in the world." This description applies to many a "modern instance" of the breed, as all who have enjoyed even a bowing acquaintance with Major Shewell's hounds, with Wolfe Tone, Cotswold, Dermot Asthore, and other well-known champions, will readily acknow-

ledge. It is, however, to the dog-lover, rather than to the dog-fancier, that we look for appreciation of the originals of the accompanying photographs. Their home at Adel, on the edge of a Yorkshire moor, is several miles from a railway station, and a far cry from the nearest butcher's shop. Here, through the summer months, they "ruralise" in Miss McCheane's luxurious kennels, in company with a small pack of Skye terriers, who make things lively for everyone concerned, from the rats in the stables to the stately wolfhounds in the yard. The latter are fortunate in their exercising-ground, an enclosed field of some forty acres, where they

have been taught to consider hares and rabbits as temptations to be resisted, not opportunities to be embraced. In the Northern November, when Yorkshire lanes are lost in mud, when the smoke pall deepens the fog, and the raw "North-Easter" drives the sleet into sunless kennels, these Irishmen, with one consent, go South. In cosy winter quarters among the pine woods of Branksome they enjoy all the advantages of English seaside life; the sands, the waves, the cliffs, the woods, the days when life is sunlit from breakfast-time



T. Fall.

AN IRISH QUARTETTE.

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till supper—all these rejoice the artist soul that wakes (or slumbers) in every well-fed wolfhound. But what these dogs enjoy most at Bournemouth are the social advantages. At Adel doggy people do not positively clamour at the gates, nor is the kennel calling list as exclusive as their hospitable hearts desire. A one-eyed collie, who brings the milk, deserves and receives a scuffling for the sickly, yet surly, depression of his tail; and the

conversation. Should he rest his head on her shoulder as she sits at table, or place a condescending paw near or on her plate, it is merely a contribution to the entertainment, not a vulgar demand for muffin. Not till his humans have left the room, and obviously abandoned the feast, does this Irish nobleman appropriate the fragments that are left.

In that charming book "The Twentieth Century Dog,"

Mr. Herbert Compton, the previous owner of Wolfe O'Brien, gives an amusing sketch of his complex character. "Wolfe O'Brien," he says, "although he hated being weighed, was so consumed with a sense of duty, that he always elevated himself, with an injured look on his face, on the luggage-weighing platforms at the railway stations he visited, long after his first year's monthly record was completed. More than once I have missed him, only to find him glued to a machine, appealing to the crowd around to weigh him quick and get it over. He was an adept at shamming, and conscious, I am sure, that indisposition led to better fare; for he often used to pretend to be feeling 'a bit off,' with a view to a treat for dinner." This diplomatic wolfhound was brought up in a London flat, and still prefers indoor life. If he can possibly sneak upstairs, he steps gently, but firmly, on to his mistress's bed, and whether it is already occupied or not, proceeds to stretch himself in human fashion, and to lay his knowing head upon the pillow. In the North, Wolfe O'Brien has made about eighty firm friends at the Home for



T. Fall.

DENNIS.

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neighbouring Scottie, who derides the hounds through the bars after "lock-up," must of necessity be either cut dead or eaten alive when encountered in the lanes. Also there is something pugnacious in Yorkshire air, and, although the canine population is comparatively scanty, dog-fights are more frequent than at Branksome. A Yorkshire dog scowls promiscuous, and the mere sight of a compatriot makes him ready to battle. All that is quite different at Bournemouth, where numbers of enlightened "humans," calling soon and often, are frank in friendship and in admiration, and where many well-mannered, clubable dogs are to be met, with whom one can pass the time of day without misunderstanding.

Wolfe O'Brien, who appears, self possessed and brindled, in these pages, possesses social gifts that are at times liable to misconstruction. When a small dog has been suddenly pounced

Waifs and Strays at Far Headingley. There, on last prize-giving day, he, with other candidates, was duly presented with a medal and a blue ribbon for good conduct, and there, whenever he enters, some eighty voices bid him welcome. No wonder that nothing will induce him to pass those friendly doors without calling. At Branksome he loves to entice the younger dogs, Roy and Dennis, into the sea, and then to frustrate all their efforts to regain the shore. As soon as either of these youngsters emerges from the waves, Wolfe O'Brien tumbles him back again, ducking him with the stern aplomb of any old bathing-woman. An inordinate affection for Devonshire cream, and a tendency to mistake his own pussies for those of other people, and to treat them to the short shrift accorded to the stranger cat, complete, I think, the list of Wolfe O'Brien's defects and attractions.

Lassie, his gentle kennel companion, daughter of Wolfe Witch and of Dermot Asthore, is an Early Victorian lady, with no interest in women's rights, nor any desire to usurp masculine place or privilege. Her sweet femininity makes for peace in the give and take (chiefly take) of kennel life; but she is the despair of the advanced ladies from Skye who share her yard, and try in vain to inspire her with their own progressive views. She is quite happy playing second fiddle to Wolfe O'Brien, and was careful to give him the best position when they were photographed together in the accompanying picture.

Roy and Dennis, Lassie's two fair sons by Champion Wolf Tone, born in July, 1904, are in form and character fair specimens of the Irish wolfhound of to-day. They were delighted to be photographed for COUNTRY LIFE, and posed, as our readers will see, charmingly. Roy, to whom the photographer has given a place of honour by taking a picture of him "all by his lone," as the children say, has a milk-and-honey temper, and is a good fellow all round. He won two first prizes last summer at the Ladies' Kennel Association's



T. Fall.

ROY.

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upon and rolled over and over in familiar greeting, both he and his mistress are wont to question or even resent the good fellowship so naively expressed. But in spite of his size, power, and exuberance, few dogs are so dainty and well behaved when invited to afternoon tea. Then, indeed, has Wolfe O'Brien the grand manner of the race. As long as his hostess is present, he evinces a polite but subdued interest in both cake and

Show and at Richmond. His brother, Dennis, enjoys David and Jonathan friendship with Wee Mac of Adel, handsome Skye laddie who was among the prize-winners at Cruft's this year. There is something pathetic in this modern instance of "Dignity and Impudence"; Wee Mac, combining the offices of hero-worshipper and gentleman-in-waiting, loses no opportunity of service. Whether Dennis

requires a confab in a quiet corner or hide and seek among the bushes, his small adorer is ready and waiting.

The quartette, as shown in the group, fairly represent typical wolfhound character—that is, good temper, reflective power, and a reserve of fighting pluck. These qualities, and the loveliness that intimacy with the breed never fails to reveal, explain, I think, the rank taken by these dogs in heraldry as the protectors of their country. Erin, it will be remembered, sits somewhat sadly beside her harp, near the round tower; close by, keeping faithful watch and ward over all three, lies a noble wolfhound.

Thanks to Captain Graham, Major Shewell, and others, and especially to the hard-working secretaries, past and present, of the Irish Wolfhound Club, public taste is to some extent adopting this magnificent breed. These hounds have a wide range of colour, and the lovable dog documents that inhabit their shapely bodies may be bound in a tawny red, an ebony black, a pure white, or be grey, fawn, or brindled, as Nature and the purchaser may fancy.

GEORGE FROST.

WILD COUNTRY LIFE.

THE NUTCRACKER.

A DISTINGUISHED big-game-hunter of my acquaintance fills up much of his spare time in the spring of the year by the collecting of birds' eggs. He is not one of those collectors who work so much harm among our rarer birds by the purchasing of clutches from poor country people who are readily tempted to add a few shillings to their small wages. He is, in fact, a careful and husband-like sportsman, who plays the game, and, after taking an egg or two

attack and kill. It would be interesting to know whether any of my readers have noted the appearance of the nutcracker in Britain during the last few years.

CROSSBILLS AND APPLES.

The visits of crossbills to this country are, of course, much more familiar than those of the nutcracker. Why this should be it is very hard to say. Both are great lovers of pine forests; both exist in the northern parts of Europe and Asia; our climate should not be greatly objectionable to either; yet the nutcracker seldom favours us with a visit; the crossbill pretty often. The latter bird is even found breeding in Scotland and Ireland, and occasionally nests with us in England, even in our Southern Counties. The destructiveness of crossbills among our apple orchards is well known. There is a clear tradition of an immense irruption of these birds in the reign of Edward III—to be precise, in the year 1251. The invasion must have been a very large one, and the country people seem to have suffered severely. Apples were doubtless quite plentiful in England in those days, and the loss sustained must have been great indeed to have merited the records which have come down to us. In Elizabeth's reign—1593—there was another incursion disastrous to farmers and husbandmen. Some people seem to imagine that crossbills destroy apples for the fruit. This is not so; they seek mainly the pips, which are carefully divested of the brown outer husk, which is then rejected. Not many years since a careful observer counted the number of pips found within the mouth, crop, and oesophageal tract of an English crossbill. There were seventy-two. Allowing the full number of five pips to an apple, this would represent more than fourteen of this fruit destroyed by a single bird. A few hundreds of crossbills would, at this rate, ruin in a few weeks the apple orchards of a large district. In Edward III.'s time there would seem to have been immense flights of these handsome, but destructive, birds in England. Two facts in connection with my observation of the curious crossbill in England and Norway are, first, the fearlessness of this species—except during the nesting season, when they become more shy; second, the extraordinary clamour raised by a half-grown brood of young ones, when calling upon the parent bird for food. I know few feathered creatures which can be approached so closely by human beings.

THE DESTRUCTIVE BULLFINCH.

If English gardeners could be polled they would vote, I believe, for the rare and less-known terrors of the crossbill in preference to the assaults of that familiar and handsome plague the bullfinch, which takes each spring so heavy a toll of their fruit trees. In spite of the outcry of sentimentalists, it is to be admitted that the bullfinch, gaily ornamental though it is—a very gem among our British birds—is a sad marauder. An examination of the interior of one of these birds during the fruit-budding season will convince any scoffer how well founded are the charges laid against the bullfinch by gardeners and nurserymen. The destruction levied by a pair or two of these birds among the embryo blossoms of gooseberry, currant, cherry, and plum is very real and very severe, and, much as one may regret the slaying of so great an ornament to our gardens and hedge-



T. Fall.

LASSIE AND WOLFE O'BRIEN.

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with his own hands, leaves our scarcer species in peace. This spring he has journeyed as far as the eastern shores of the Adriatic for the purpose of obtaining the eggs of the nutcracker, a rare British bird which, so far as I know, has not nested in these islands. So scarce is this bird with us that its occurrence has not been reported in England much more than a score of times. Its general colouring may be briefly described as of a rusty brown, with triangular white markings, the vent white, the quills and tail blackish. The dark tail feathers are tipped with white; the upper part of the head and nape are dark brown. This curious bird nests commonly in great pine forests, and my friend has travelled as far as the wooded mountains of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Montenegro to secure a clutch or two of the eggs of so rare a British species.

HABITS OF THE NUTCRACKER.

It is difficult to understand why the nutcracker, which has an extremely wide distribution, should so seldom venture overseas to these islands. It is true that the pine forests in which it loves to seclude itself are comparatively rare in Britain, compared with those huge tracts of country in which this bird makes its home, from Sweden to Japan, in other parts of the world. But coniferous woodlands, many of them of considerable extent, are to be found in Scotland and elsewhere, and there seems no really adequate reason why the nutcracker should visit us so seldom. This bird, although somewhat smaller than the magpie, is a true crow, and, like others of that family, has a pretty omnivorous appetite, devouring eggs, the young of other birds, beetles, worms, seeds of conifers, walnut, hazel, and other nuts, acorns, bees, wasps, and many kinds of insects and their larvae. Its nest is crow-like, made of the branches of larch, pine, and spruce, and lined with dry grass, moss, and bast. The eggs, usually from three to five in number, are whitish, minutely spotted with pale brown. Not only is the nutcracker found amid the forests of Northern and Central Europe, as well as Northern Spain, Switzerland, France, Transylvania, and the Adriatic countries, but its range extends through Siberia to Kamchatka, and, as I have said, even distant Japan. It is a great migrant, moving far afield in search of food, and has been observed in the forests of Siberia going south in thousands. In captivity the nutcracker seems to do very well, but, owing to its fierce habits, it is not safe to place it with other birds, which, in spite of their superior size, it will

rows, it must be admitted that the fruit grower has good reason for the revenge which at times he wreaks. It seems to be thought by some people that the outcry against the bullfinch is quite a new thing. This is entirely a mistaken notion; our forefathers of the Tudor, Stuart, and Georgian days were perfectly well aware of the depredations of these gay rascals, and protected themselves—as, indeed, they were entitled to do—as well as they might. Knapp, a naturalist who wrote in the earlier part of the last century, says of this bird: "It generally commences with the germs of our larger and most early gooseberry, and the bright, red breasts of four or five cock birds, quietly feeding on the leafless bush, are a very pretty sight, but the consequences are ruinous to the crop. When the cherry buds begin to come forward, they quit the gooseberry, and make tremendous havoc with these. I have an early wall cherry—a May Duke by reputation—that has for years been a great favourite with the bullfinch family, and its celebrity seems to be communicated to each successive generation. It buds profusely, but is annually so stripped of its promise by these feathered rogues that its kind might be doubted. The Orleans and greengage plums next form a treat, and draw their attention from what remains of the cherry. Having banqueted here awhile, they leave our gardens entirely, resorting to the fields and hedges, where the sloe bush in April furnishes them with food." Knapp is, undoubtedly, a witness of exact truth.

THE BOLDNESS OF THE NIGHTINGALE.

By many people the nightingale is supposed to be one of the most timid and retiring of all birds, burying itself deep in its thickets, and refusing to sing except when it imagines itself in complete solitude. My experience of nightingales is that they are not nearly such shy birds as many people imagine, not easily to be driven from their hedgerow or thorn bush, and by no means indisposed to flure even when they know that human beings are sitting and even quietly conversing near them. To those who know them well, these birds are seen quite often; they are essentially ground feeders, and may be often observed picking up their sustenance from Mother Earth. I have lately met with a rather singular instance of boldness in one of these birds. For the last week or two I have several times passed a particular spot on a public highway, on which there happens to be a good deal of traffic. Whenever I have passed, usually in the afternoon, a nightingale has been sitting,

always in identically the same place, on a telegraph wire, where it pipes forth its rich liquid notes without being in the least disturbed by the proximity of traffic. It remains in full view of the road, and the frequent passage of cycles, carriages, and motor-cars seems to disturb it not at all. Six times I have ridden close to the bird within the last four days without its attempting to quit its perch. Various friends of mine have had the same experience of this particular bird. The nightingale is, in my judgment, not nearly so timid or so retiring a creature as

many people seem to imagine. I quite agree with other observers that the movements of migratory birds this spring have been very abnormal. As a rule one hears and sees large numbers of nightingales near the coast-line of East Sussex during the end of April and beginning of May. This year there seemed a pronounced scarcity during this period. In Warwickshire, near Stratford-on-Avon, I heard far more nightingales at this time than I had done a day or two before in East Sussex, in one of their most favourite localities.

H. A. B.

A BOOK OF THE WEEK.

IT is seldom nowadays that we come across a really amusing book. The fashionable novelist of the moment is much more under the inspiration of the tragic than of the comic muse, and for one who can raise a genuine laugh there are a thousand who can wring the heart with pathos. This must serve as an excuse for dealing at length with *Count Bonker* (Blackwood). It is a book that does not belong to the highest class of literature, and yet there is scarcely a page in it which is not full of wholesome laughter. What it reminds us of most is a stage extravaganza or farce written out in book form. The story, we need scarcely say, is grossly improbable. The principal character in it is Rudolf von Blitzenberg, who is attached to the Embassy in London. He is a very good sort of man, and in reality an example of the domestic virtues, but this does not prevent him from becoming just a trifle bored with the very amiable wife whom, nevertheless, he loves to distraction, and being somewhat afraid of his mother-in-law, who is the conventional mother-in-law of novel and play. He has an acquaintance, as readers of Mr. Clouston's previous books are aware, with one of those men who float about on the surface of society; a gentleman, no doubt, but containing a spice of adventure enough to make him a dangerous companion in the eyes of the German Baron's womenkind, and yet not so bad, in the homely old phrase, but that he might be worse. This man, being somewhat of a harum-scarum, forms a madcap scheme which involves the German's going to the Highlands of Scotland and passing as a Highland chieftain—Lord Tulliwuddle. The peer in question is under the influence of those who would have arranged a match between him and an American heiress, who was, to use the phrase that seems appropriate to the occasion, in the market. However, he is carrying on a flirtation on his own account with a London actress, and falls in readily with the suggestion that he should be personated by the Baron. Much of the fun comes from the absurdity of making a German baron pass as a Highland laird. The nature of the fooling may be gathered from the following passage:

"I cannot wait till I have seen Miss Gallosh dance ze Highland reel," he explained to her gratified mother; "she has promised me."

"But you must dance, too, Lord Tulliwuddle," said ravishing Miss Gallosh. "You know you said you would."

"A promise to a lady is a law," replied the Baron, gallantly, adding in a lower tone, "especially to so fair a lady!"

"It's a pity his lordship hadn't on his kilt," put in Mr. Gallosh, genially.

"By ze Gad, I vill put him on! Huch! Ve vill have some fun!"

The Baron rushed from the hall, followed in a moment by his noble friend. Bunker found him already wrapping many yards of tartan about his waist.

"But, my dear fellow, you must take off your trousers," he expostulated.

Despite his glee, the Baron answered with something of the Blitzenberg dignity: "Ze bare leg I cannot show to-night; not to dance mit ze young ladies. Ven I have practise'd, perhaps; but not now, Bonker."

The author's spirits never seem to flag from the first page to the last, and the book throughout may be described as bubbling over with fun. Perhaps if he had tried to be credible he would not have been so amusing; but so naturally is the case presented that we are scarcely ever struck with the absurdity of making a German who cannot speak the English language pose as the laird of a Highland estate. In other respects there is a considerable amount of exaggeration in the volume. One cannot believe that an American heiress would bargain with such brutal directness as does Miss Maddison about her marriage. The scene in which the millionaire and his son interview the supposed suitor is extremely funny, and there is almost a touch of genius in causing the American to have a phonograph going all the time, so that the words of the diplomatist are recorded. The American girl herself treats matrimony in a manner as matter-of-fact as that of the daughter of a self-made Scotch millionaire, who is also brought on to the scene. With the story a considerable amount of satire is mixed, and, as might be expected, the feudalism of Sir Walter Scott comes in for a good deal of mockery. But over and over again the author comes perilously near the most ridiculous burlesque, as, for example, his description of the Highland sports. One of the events appears in the programme, "Lord Tulliwuddle throws the 85lb. hammer," and this said hammer is brought into the ring on the backs of three stalwart Highland men, to the great dismay of the Baron.

"Teufel! Bonker vill make a fool of me," he muttered, and hastily bursting from the circle of spectators, hurried towards the Count, who

appeared to be busied in keeping the curious away from the Chieftain's hammer.

"Bonker, vat means zis?" he demanded.

"Your hammer," smiled the Count.

"A hammer zat takes tree men—"

"Hush!" whispered the Count. "They are only holding it down!"

The Baron laid his hand upon the round enormous head, and started.

"It is not iron!" he gasped. "It is of rubber."

"Filled with hydrogen," breathed the Count in his ear. "Just swing it once and let go—and, I say, mind it doesn't carry you away with it."

The chief bared his arms and seized the handle; his three clansmen let go; and then, with what seemed to the breathless spectators to be a merely trifling effort of strength, he dismissed the projectile upon the most astounding journey ever seen in that land of brawny hammer-hurlers. Up, up, up it soared, over the trees; high above the topmost turret of the castle, and still on and on and ever upwards till it became a mere speck in the zenith, and at last faded utterly from sight.

Then, and not till then, did the pent-up applause break out into such a roar of cheering as Hechnahoul had never heard before in all its long history.

"Eighty-five pounds of pig-iron gone straight to heaven!" gasped the Silver King. "Guess that beats all records!"

It can be easily imagined that a beautiful scrape has been prepared for these adventurers—a scrape that is all the more amusing because of the transparent honesty of those engaged in it. The author, however, finds a way out of the difficulties with the same facility with which he led up to them, and in the end it need scarcely be said that nobody is hurt or injured. What is of serious interest in a book of this kind is to show the difference between it and real literature, though, of course, in doing so we wish to absolve ourselves from any feeling of ingratitude to any author who has made us laugh, even though the amusement he produces is only that which would be derived from witnessing a farce at the theatre. If Mr. Clouston would set himself to invent a plot where the action would be more probable, and more in agreement with the ordinary run of things in human nature, he might write a book that would have much more than a passing vogue. At present no better advice can be given him than that of turning up and rereading, with all the attention he can command, the pages of "Joseph Andrews." Here is burlesque as full of animal spirits as the volume before us. Here is a book that caused Homeric laughter at the time of its first production; yet it has endured far beyond the age of ordinary farces, for the simple reason that its author, as he has himself told us, took the book of human nature for his text, and was careful never to pass the boundaries of truth in delineating the men and women that appear in that immortal work. It is a true picture of life, and the fun bubbles up as naturally as springs do in fertile soil. Were Mr. Clouston to turn his book into a curtain-raiser, he would surely command a very brilliant success.

A merit that ought not to pass unnoticed is that the author diligently reflects life as it is lived to-day. In London we are taken to clubs and restaurants. It would, in fact, not be difficult to give a name to the place of entertainment where one of the most important and amusing interviews takes place. Journeys are made in corridor carriages; motor-cars and bicycles are brought freely into use; the millionaires and other leading characters are possessed of all the latest resources of civilisation; and through the burlesque we can see that the author has presented a living picture of the life of his time. He has not taken the trouble to mingle with it any real romance. Such love-making as occurs hovers between jest and earnest, and is always more inclined to the former than the latter. The baron's marital affection is never in doubt, even though circumstances cause him to sail perilously near the wind with the young ladies to whom he plays the part of a lover by proxy. He never seems to be seriously tempted into infidelity to his wife, even though he puts himself into a false position with regard to the ladies to whom he pays court as the personator of Lord Tulliwuddle; and his friend and companion in all this mischief remains, as far as we can see, hearty whole at the end, although he is ready for a flirtation at a moment's notice. Perhaps the funniest scenes in the book are those in which a romantic girl, who is something of a blue-stocking, takes him for the character he represents, and credits him with being the learned editor of a very erudite book, who lives according to the simple and unconventional lines there laid down, while all the time he is thirsting for the ordinary pleasures of conventional society.



B. C. Wickison.

THE GATE OF THE WOOD.

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A PALACE AS CLUB-HOUSE.

THERE is something peculiarly interesting to a wider class of the community than the golfers who have made it their home in the historical associations which cluster round the Eltham club-house. In external appearance the house itself has nothing to distinguish it from many old mansions once the centres of a wide territorial social influence throughout the English shires, and which have now in these later years become the home of many a flourishing golf club. The Eltham club-house stands square upon a knoll, dominating by its view one of the fairest prospects of Kent; and the lands with their immemorial elms, which were

at one time the sequestered pleasure-grounds of its Royal and other inhabitants, are now laid out with raised and sunk bunker, finely-trimmed putting greens, and well-arranged teeing grounds, affording much healthful recreation to the membership of 400 golfers attached to the club. But though there are many fine old mansion houses which have become the home of golfers in these latter years of acute agricultural depression, it is practically certain that no modern golf club has a more interesting history, nor a home for the social relaxation of its members which is at once so rare and beautiful in its interior adornment. Truly golf at Eltham has a stately home!





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DETAIL OF CARVING.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

The accompanying illustrations will go a long way to substantiate this claim for the Eltham Club. As the etymology of the name imports, Eltham, Ealdham, or Altham is really Anglo-Saxon for "old village"; and as all the land round Eltham had been Crown land from the earliest time, and was situated, besides, but nine miles from the *fumus et opes strepitumque* of the mighty capital itself, there is more than conjectural probability for the statement that either the present site of the Eltham club-house, or somewhere near, had long been the chosen spot for a Royal palace. From a most interesting little book compiled by the Rev. T. Norman Rowsell, and dedicated to the Eltham golfers, the traditions, legends, and assured history of the present club-house have been perseveringly and lovingly scanned. From its pages the golfer of to-day learns something of the ancient memories and associations which entwine themselves around his game as he makes a daily circuit of the course, and which in actual fact still preserve their intimacy with golf as a Royal and Ancient pastime. Queen Elizabeth was the last of our monarchs actually to hold court at Eltham, but not, of course, in the house which is now the home of the golf club. In the time of Charles I. the demesne lands of Eltham were part of the dower lands of Queen Henrietta Maria, but in the time of the Commonwealth the soldiers and the people destroyed the park and all its amenities. Thus in 1656 Evelyn states in his diary that "the palace and chapel were in miserable ruins; the noble woods and park destroyed by rich and rebel." But when Charles II. came back from his exile in 1660, the lands were restored as part of his mother's property.

The present Eltham club-house was built in 1664 by Sir John Shaw, a merchant and banker of London and Antwerp, who helped Charles II. when in exile with a great deal of useful cash. At the Restoration Charles II. did not find it expedient to discharge his financial obligations to Sir John Shaw by payment of his loans in money. But as a return for the welcome help he had received the King granted a baronetcy to Sir John Shaw and the lease of the Manor of Eltham in perpetuity, subject to the payment of certain fines, with permission to build a mansion. This lease gave all the rights of fishing, hawking, and hunting for £9 per annum, with 20s. additional for the old house, while a fine of £3,700 was appended. If there was any failure in paying the fines the manor reverted to the Crown. It was

here that the old merchant-banker enjoyed his ease as a country gentleman, and dispensed a good deal of hearty English hospitality. Charles paid a state visit to the old squire after the house was built, and Evelyn, the diarist, and Pepys were also there while the house was being got ready. As the golfer to-day looks from the home hole down the long avenue of "The Chase" in the distance, he will realise to some extent the scale upon which Sir John Shaw kept up his social position when he learns that the long avenue which extends almost from the club-house to Chislehurst was the training-ground of Sir John Shaw's horses. The last occupant of the old house, before it became the golf club, was Mrs. Wood, who died at the age of ninety-eight. Her husband was Mr. Benjamin Wood, a hop merchant and a member of Parliament, the representative of a distinguished family which included among its members Lord Hatherley and General Sir Evelyn Wood. Mrs. Wood, who began to live in the house in 1838, had memories of the rise of Napoleon Bonaparte, and the outbreak of the Peninsular War, in which her father commanded a naval squadron. Eltham was her home for over fifty years, and when she died she left a fortune of £190,000.

As will be seen from the accompanying photographs, the interior of the club-house, which is supposed to have been designed by the architect of Charles II., is highly decorated. The massive timber staircase, with its florid ornamental carving, is one of the most valuable examples extant of this style of interior adornment. In the "History of Renaissance Architecture in England," by Mr. Reginald Blomfield, treating of Sir Christopher Wren and his work, it is stated: "It is not necessary to assign directly to his design all the charming brick and stone houses built between the Restoration and 1700, such, for instance, as the beautiful interior of the house at Eltham (now the golf club-house). On the other hand, it would be idle to attribute buildings at once so simple, lovable, and dignified to academical designers . . . and if not by Wren, they were certainly inspired by his work. In this fine house, which probably dates from about 1660, fully one-third of the house longitudinally is taken up by the principal staircase and a serving stair beyond."

In "Later Renaissance Architecture in England," by John Belcher, A.R.A., and M. Macartney, it is pointed out: "Eltham Lodge, now occupied by a golf club, was formerly a spacious



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THE BALUSTER.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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TAPESTRY IN SALOON; EAST END.

"COUNTRY LIFE"

and noble mansion, with formal gardens and fine avenues, remains of which can still be traced. It dates from 1660, or thereabouts, and has passed through many vicissitudes. The name of its architect is unknown. A former owner covered its tapestried walls with imitation grained and varnished paper, which has since been removed. The oak paper, however, remains over the painted panels of the staircase, to which has been added imitation columns and figures in relief. The staircase is a notable one and quaintly treated. Part leads to a half landing and part to the main upper buildings. This latter is symmetrically planned over the hall below, and lighted by a lantern light in the roof through a balustraded opening in the floor above. The pierced balustrading on the staircase is well carved, all the panels being varied in design. The half landing has well-designed balusters. The pierced balustrading is a feature introduced from Holland. . . . The plaster ornaments and sections here (*i.e.*, the staircase), and to the ceilings throughout, are amongst the most perfect of their kind. The best are on the first floor, where the principal, or state rooms, are placed. The drawing-room, now used as a billiard-room, is one of these rooms. Here the ceiling, with its scheme of different planes and the distribution of its well-modelled and varied ornaments, is good in design and workmanship. The central and elliptical panels, like those on the staircase, were originally filled with painted subjects. The panelling, the carved architraves, and the chimney-piece are excellent. All the rooms are alike good in proportion and detail, and the building altogether is a very interesting one."

The Rev. Mr. Rowsell describes the urn-like structures on the staircase pillars as being fruit-baskets for the holding of large candlesticks as well as for ornamentation. Over the fireplace in the billiard-room the name of the first owner, he says, is carved in the upper cornice of the woodwork, while in the ceiling of the same room the oak leaf is used in the mouldings for decoration in commemoration of Charles's escape after the flight at Worcester.

The tapestries are also an interesting feature of the Eltham club-house. They were discovered purely by accident. The walls were found to be covered with a common pattern of wall-paper, and there was a discussion as to the substitution of a new pattern. In the course of the examination of the paper a hole was discovered, and when the walls were stripped of the old paper the tapestries were found beneath. The value set upon these old tapestries may be judged by the fact that the Crown

requires the golf club to insure them for £2,000. Mr. Rowsell says the tradition is that they were a present from Charles II. to Sir John Shaw, but there is no authentic record of the story they tell. Mr. Rowsell's theory is that, owing to the presence in some of the panels of a fruit like apple or pomegranate, they represent the history of Granada in compliment to Henrietta Maria; others represent the last struggle of Spain with the Moors, Isabella of Castile holding an interview with Columbus before he set out to discover America, and other subjects. A. J. ROBERTSON.

ON THE GREEN.

WHETHER I have been among golfers since the amateur championship, the question that I am most often asked is, "How do you account for it?" Meaning, for the defeat of so many of the reputed good and great men at such early stages of the tournament, and, generally, at the hands of men of no such great fame. It is not very difficult to account for it. To say that golf is a queer game is not to hazard any remarkably recondite or new comment. In the first place, at a game where the chances are so many as at golf, A must be a very much better player indeed than B if B is not likely to beat him, let us say, once out of a dozen matches. A's best may be far, far above B's best, and A's average still further above B's average; but that is by no means to say that A's worst is above B's best, and it may quite well happen that the day of their meeting in the amateur championship may just be that day on which A's worst coincides with B's best; with the result of "exit A," and "enter B" into the next round, in triumph. That is one way in which the upset of the apple cart may happen; and the most simple. There are other ways which are a little more subtle, and, perhaps, rather more common. It is easy to imagine that in the morning A, our formidable player, has encountered another almost, if not quite, as formidable as himself. The match has been a keen one. We must imagine A to have played up well, for we are to imagine him to have won this match, and it is more than likely that by the meeting of two men of such great renown a gallery will have been attracted. In fact, in the morning A will have gone out and come in with all the feeling that he has been doing a big thing, and seeing that we are supposing him to be a great player, he is pretty sure to have risen to the occasion and to have done the big thing well. Now, after this,

we will suppose that A has to go out in the afternoon to meet a player of the B class, one whom he knows he ought to beat. Everybody else knows also that he ought to beat B. There is no gallery attendant on this match. The two go out unnoticed; it is all very flat work compared with the exciting business of the morning; A feels that there is no glory to be gained by the beating of such an one as the ignoble B; there is a reaction from the morning's zealous endeavour. The result is extremely apt to be that A plays a good deal below his best, and if B, who, conversely, has all to win and nothing to lose in this match, contrives to put up anything of a game at all, it is more than likely that he will make it very nasty for A.

It really is on this account, or on accounts like this, that most of the upsets of form take place in such a competition as the amateur championship, where the play is over eighteen holes only, so that almost anything may happen. A point about golf matches which is often overlooked is that it is quite possible for the man who is playing better than his opponent to lose to him, and this without any very obvious pieces of execrable bad luck. If a game of golf could be scored by points, on the analogy of a coursing match, this would not be nearly so likely to occur; but, unfortunately, with all the ingenuity which is expended upon the game on both sides of the Atlantic, no one has yet invented any such method; we score, to carry on the coursing metaphor, only for the "kill"—that is to say, for the hole, the final result. But it may quite well happen, indeed, we often see it happen, that one man may play hole after hole better than his opponent, may be on the green in a stroke less each time, and so on, and yet, through failing to get his approach putt quite near enough, or by his opponent laying a mashie shot dead, is robbed of the advantage which really ought to have been his. He as nearly as possible gets threes and fours, but just takes fours and fives, and so is no better off on the score than his opponent, who has just scraped into the hole in the like numbers. And then, for a change, the latter plays a hole well, and all goes right with him; he does it in the "par" number, and so stands one up on the holes we have been considering, although the other has played all but one of them better than he. Of course, the answer is that it all comes fair in the long run, because if one man have the luck of this kind in one round the other man will have it in the next. No doubt that is true "in the long run," but, then, eighteen holes are not at all a long run, and on that short course it often happens that much more of this kind of luck goes one way than the other. Of course, the ideal remedy would be to score so many points for being on the putting green in a stroke less than the opponent, and so on. Or it might be calculated that the man who has just missed getting a three should be scored his actual four, but that the lucky gentleman who has achieved his four only by a long steal, or some iniquitous thing of that kind, should be scored four and three-quarters. This is the ideal; it goes without saying that it is everything rather than practical or possible. That is quite another story. Nor are we sure that we want all the injustices eliminated; for what we might gain in justice we might lose in amusement—and that is a far more important matter.

THE IRISH CHAMPIONSHIP.

UNWITTINGLY—it is always unwittingly that these dreadful crimes are done—I was guilty of yet another grave "injustice to Ireland" in discussing the course of this year's "native championship." I expressed surprise at seeing Mr. Newett's name placed before that of Mr. Reade (whom, by the by, Mr. Kelly beat in the championship) as representing Ulster against Leinster. I even spoke of Mr. Newett's name as a new one to golfing fame; and then, immediately afterwards, I was appalled to discover that he was the then actual holder of the "native" Hibernian championship. It shows a most careless reading of the records, for which I owe all apology. But it also shows how very little Mr. Newett has done in the way of golf outside of Ireland, and by way of some making up for this discourtesy may we express a hope that we shall see him in the bigger amateur championship here very soon? The final heat in that "native" championship this year must have been thrillingly exciting. Mr. Cairnes, "down" all the way, squared the thirty-six-hole match; the next supplementary hole was halved, and then Mr. Boyd won with a fine four at the second hole. Congratulations to Mr. Boyd! Sympathy for Mr. Cairnes! They do these finals better in Ireland than we seem able to do them here! Mr. Boyd now holds both "native" and open amateur championships of Ireland.

THE ANNUAL COMPETITION AT MITCHAM.

Some people may have had the bad taste to be of the opinion that the most interesting play of last Saturday was the professionals' international match, but my personal view is that the most interesting was the annual competition (the only competition, I believe, in the year) of the Princes' Golf Club at Mitcham. Of course the carping critic will say that my view was coloured by the accident that I had the fortune to win the scratch prize at that competition with a score of 76. Let him carp. One of the best bits of play therein was Mr. W. Mure's 77, at which he tied with Mr. Ranson for second place. Considering how many years ago it is that Mr. Mure created a record for the best winning medal score at St. Andrews with 85—a record that held its place for some years—it is wonderful that he should be still so well to the fore, with men like Mr. C. K. Hutchison, Mr. W. H. Fowler, and others of note behind him in the field. The Mitcham course was at its longest, with the tees far back, much superior to the somewhat shortened

course which used to be given us there a few years ago. The lies through the green were typical—no one will venture to say that an alternative word for this would be indifferent—and one could not trust the pitch of the ball on the approach shot; but the putting greens also were typical—and everyone will say that another word for this would be good. The course would be all the better for some rain, but that is not within the control of the green-keeper. Two players, Mr. Hoig-on and Mr. Rafferty, the one with six handicap and the other with seven, tied at 74 net for the handicap prize, and they should attract more attention from the handicappers for the future.

HORACE HUTCHINSON.

FIXTURES.

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| June 18th to 20th.—Scottish Ladies' Championship at Cruden Bay. | September 7th and 8th.—Northern Counties Tournament at Loughmouth. |
| June 25th.—Royal St. George's Challenge Cup at Sandwich. | September 21st.—Hanger Hill: Open Amateur Meeting. |
| June 26th.—Royal St. George's, Sandwich: St. George's Challenge Cup. | September 26th.—Royal and Ancient Club: Autumn Meeting. |
| July 1st and 2nd.—Open Championship of France at La Boulie, Versailles. | September 28th and 29th.—Open Amateur Meeting and the "Bushey" Challenge Cup at Bushey Hall. |
| August 23rd to 30th.—Welsh Amateur Championship at Radyr. | October 6th, 8th, and 9th.—The Borough of Deal Challenge Cup. |
| August 27th.—Irish Open Championship at Portrush. | |
| September 3rd.—Irish Open Championship at Portrush. | |
| June 16th.—Wembley: Open Amateur Meeting. | |
| June 23rd.—Hanger Hill: Open Amateur Meeting. | |
| July 11th.—Open Amateur and Professional Meeting at Trafford Park. | |
| August 7th.—Royal and Ancient Club: Calcutta Cup Tournament. | |
| August 18th.—Borough of Hythe Challenge Trophy. | |
| August 21st to 23rd.—Dornoch: Annual Meeting and Tournament. | |
| September 4th.—Royal and Ancient Club: Jubilee Vase. | |

FROM THE FARMS.

THE HAY CROP.

IN the Southern Counties the scythe and the hay cutter are already at work, but it is obvious that the hay harvest is going to be a late one this year, and will not begin in earnest over the country at large until after the middle of the month. The season has not by any means been a promising one. The grass was kept back very much in the beginning of the year by the untimely cold, and although at one time we had so much rain, some of the farmers are already calling out that the drought is checking the growth. The meadow hay this year will not be up to the average, and it is doubtful whether the seeds will be any better. This is the more to be regretted, because the old hay which had been kept for many years has been practically exhausted owing to the scarcity of fodder during the prolonged winter and the inclement spring. Not for a great number of years has any such scarcity been experienced, and prophecies are already rife that before Christmas comes the price of hay will have risen to £5 a ton. Reports from the North are a little more favourable. There they have had vast quantities of rain, which, though inconvenient in many respects, has at least stimulated growth in the grasses, and it is very possible that if we have good weather for the next five or six weeks the North will be well supplied with hay, while there will be a deficiency in the South. Of course, with this crop everything depends on the weather. It ought to be cut just before the seeds begin to ripen, and if wet weather should prevail then it is bound to lose in value, because if cut it cannot be saved in the best condition, and if left standing the nutriment that was in the grass begins to flow towards the seeds. On the other hand, despatch is much more possible in these days than it used to be. The process of cutting lasts only for a very short time, and nowadays, what with the hay sweep and the elevator, the hay can be very quickly made into a rick. This should be done at the stage which permits of a certain amount of heat, though that should not be excessive. It is a mistake to allow hay to become too dry.

THE GRAZING SEASON.

It is somewhat annoying to farmers to find that their stock has been growing in value while the grazing is going off. According to the last return of market prices issued by the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, the improved trade for fat cattle continues to be maintained; stall-fed beasts are becoming every week scarcer, and grass-fed may now be expected in increasing numbers. Those brought forward already have realised high prices. Fat sheep continue to sell remarkably well, the high price being attributed in some degree to the increasing value of the pelts; but in contrast to this satisfactory condition of things are the reports of the grazing season. From many districts we hear that the meadows have shown very little progress; the fields are green, it is true, but there has been no growth in the herbage, with the consequence that store cattle and sheep have not been making anything like the progress expected at this period of the year. If this state of things continues, no doubt many graziers will be compelled to bring their animals to market sooner than is usually the case, and they have the great aggravation of knowing that what they do or what they did not do can scarcely

produce any perceptible effect upon the market. This is governed not by the number and quality of the beasts produced at home, but by the beef sent in from outside.

POULTRY-KEEPING IN GERMANY.

The poultry-keeper in Great Britain may decidedly learn something from the report of Dr. Koenig, the British Consul at Dusseldorf. Near to that town a subsidised poultry farm has been started in connection with the local Chamber of Agriculture, and the experiments conducted there ought to have a distinct

briefly summarised. It has been found, for example, that just as the best dairy cows are bred from a good milking strain, so if you wish to get good laying hens you must have laying ancestors. It has been also proved that if a young cockerel is matched with old hens more cock chickens are produced, while if old cocks are matched with young hens more hen chickens result from the union. Concerning the housing and rearing the conclusions arrived at are very much the same as those which English poultry-keepers believe in. When hens are too closely confined they do



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DORSET HORN RAMS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

practical value. The results are not the less valuable because they do not accord with our own. The Germans have shown that in the conditions prevailing there the White Wyandotte hen is the best layer, the next being the Italians. In a competition between the two breeds the Wyandottes came out with a distinct advantage. Some of the other conclusions arrived at may be

not lay so freely as when they have a large run. Much has been done in the way of testing buildings. It was found that a poultry house let into the ground 3ft. deep, with a roof covered with sods, afforded warmth in winter and coolness in summer. It is also inexpensive, and, therefore, within easy reach of the poultry-keeper of limited means.

SHOOTING.

NOTES ON THE GROUSE DISEASE, BY "H. S. G."

BY a happy and curious coincidence, just at the time when the Grouse Disease Commission, as it is called, was formed, there seemed to be a general cessation of the disease throughout the country, and but little progress has been made with the labours of the Commission because of the scarcity of diseased birds, which should be the subject of their investigations. It is now just a year ago that the Commission received for its consideration a paper entitled "Notes on Grouse Disease: prepared by H. S. G. for the use of the Committee enquiring into Grouse Disease." It will be no news to a good many that the initials "H. S. G." are those of a very thorough and scientific naturalist as well as a keen sportsman. These notes have been kindly sent to us to use as we please, and we propose to quote a few extracts from them.

"Dr. Klein," the writer says, "in his book on this subject published in 1892, definitely states that from his investigations he is able to affirm that 'Grouse Disease' is lung trouble; that it arises from congestion of the lungs and other organs setting up fever, which, being highly infectious, may be termed an acute infectious pneumonia. We need not here enter into bacteriological details, but will simply endeavour to explain how a victim suffering from this 'Grouse Disease' may be recognised. The victim will be noticed to 'sit close,' and when once on the wing will be noticed to fly heavily and only for a short distance. These signs show inertia and loss of muscular power owing to fever. The victim will often be found near water, either alive or

dead, fever naturally causing an abnormal thirst. The call of the victim becomes hoarse and less clear owing to the congested state of the mucous membrane of the larynx. The feathers on the breast and throat no longer are smooth and with a metallic gloss, but become ruffled and dull, owing, doubtless, to the irritation caused to the throat by the fever within. The flaming orange-red eyelids fade, and the victim in all respects looks 'seedy.'

"Loss of weight may at times, though not invariably, be another sign of grouse disease, as may also the legs being bare of feathers. Such, then, is the external evidence. As regards the internal evidence, the crop is often found full of undigested food, though not invariably so; but it is only natural to suppose that with loss of health, speedy loss of digestion would follow. An examination of the lungs reveals the fact that they are highly congested. The normal sponge-like appearance will be found to have been minimised, for the small apertures will have become plugged with hard caseous nodules. If a portion of lung be removed and thrown into water it will readily sink, whereas a piece of sound lung treated in the same way will be found to float. Moreover, the lungs of the victim, instead of being of a bright pink colour, will be seen to be a dark purple red. Other parts of the internal organs will show signs of more or less congestion, which have together combined to throw the victim into a high fever that has shown itself externally, as we have explained. This fever is highly infectious, and is readily spread from one bird to another. Dr. Klein found that it could not be transmitted in any kind of food, as the gastric juices apparently

nullified the poisonous bacilli of the disease, but that healthy birds breathing infected air might become victims he positively proved."

The writer then goes on to cite certain experiments made by Dr. Klein, which really do go so far as to warrant the strong statement of the closing sentence quoted. He touches on the query whether the fever can be carried by midges and gnats, as the malarial fevers are carried by the *Anopheles* mosquito. He also discusses the question whether the disease is "endemic or epidemic; that is, is it always present, or does it only come in certain years?" and decides very confidently in favour of the former theory—"that it is, as it were, waiting ready to show itself directly it can find grouse not strong enough to resist it."

These observations of Dr. Klein, it is to be noted, were published as far back as 1892, and, in spite of their rather positive tone, the very existence of this "Grouse Disease Commission," with pathological experts engaged on it, in itself seems to prove that a good many do not think that the last word has been said about the disease.

The writer of these notes himself comments on the singular connection between this disease and the presence of the small thread-like worm, *Strongylus pergracilis*, in the intestines, and virtually confesses himself to find it a puzzle. Nor, when it comes to the very practical question of how to check, to cure, or to prevent the disease, does there appear as yet to be any word to say which can be considered either new or final. There are many other observations and side-lights on the subject, interesting and valuable, although too long to mention now, but the only counsel or advice that the writer has to offer is in the fairly obvious form of a recommendation of measures which shall render the grouse as strong as possible to resist the lurking enemy—to avoid leaving too large a stock, for one thing (and in this connection he naturally points out how often the disease has occurred after an unusually good year), and to adopt all the devices which the latest experience has shown to be most conducive to the health and vigour of the birds. This article has already run to too great a length to admit of further quotation from the notes (that may be for another time), but it in no way deducts from their value that they indicate no new and royal road to the prevention of the disease in the future. It is for the discovery of that road that the present Commission has its being.

YOUNG WILD DUCK.

ALTHOUGH wild duck are such hardy little birds, it seems that they have suffered, perhaps more than any of the other birds which we shoot, from the cold weather of the spring, probably because they nest earlier than most other kinds, and so encountered the very worst of the cold before the mother duck began to sit on the eggs. For other birds, such as grouse, which lay in very open nests, there are two principal times of peril from frost for the eggs and young birds; the first is before the bird begins to sit, and the second, after the young have grown so big that the mother cannot cover them properly. The second is a danger which does not menace young ducks as



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A RUN IN THE GRASS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."



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HEN FOSTER-MOTHERS IN PENS.

"COUNTRY LIFE."

much as the young of most kinds, because they are well covered with down and altogether are more independent. But the duck requires all its large brood in order to keep up its numbers, for besides the common enemies of birds in general it has aquatic enemies also to deal with, such as big pike and otters; and, moreover, its peculiar moult, losing all the quill feathers of the wing at once, so as to make it incapable of flight, places it very much at the mercy of vermin.

WOODCOCK RISING OFF WATER.

A few weeks ago we published some remarks by a well-known observer of Nature in the North of England on "Woodcock in the Snow." The writer's point was the evidence of the woodcock's nocturnal actions which the soft surface recorded; and among his observations was one which went to show, as we should have been greatly surprised had it not shown, that the idea of the woodcock using its long bill as a kind of jumping pole to aid it in rising from the ground and taking wing is no more than a "fiction of the poets." The snow showed the imprint of the bird's feet, and also the signs of the tips of the wings breaking the snow as the bird had taken flight, but there was no hole in the snow where the bill, according to the poetical fiction, should have entered it. In comment upon the fact, and also upon the whole question of birds' ability to rise from plane surfaces, whether of land or of water, and the difficulty which some kinds find in rising from either or from both, a correspondent sends us a very singular account of a wounded woodcock actually rising off the water after falling into it and lying there for some minutes. The incident took place in Ireland. The bird was shot, as we understand, by a gun standing forward. It fell into a clear pool of water, with no reeds or rushes or anything to give it support. It was seen to fall by the shooter himself, and also by one of the guns coming up, and by both, as well as by a third gun, all of whom are personally ready to vouch, and, in fact, have vouched, for the truth of the story, was seen to rise up off the water and fly away after lying there for several—one of the witnesses says five—minutes. Of course, the singular thing is not that the bird, which was, no doubt, merely stunned by the shot, should recover its life so as to be able to fly, but that it should be able to lift itself off the water, apparently with ease, and take to flight. We know that many even of the aquatic birds, with the aid of their webbed feet, have great difficulty in rising off water; and it is very much more surprising that the woodcock should be able to do so with

the apparent ease indicated by this account. In less degree it is singular that the feathers of a bird, which is really a land bird, and is not provided with the fine supply of oil in the plumage which makes the feathers of the real aquatic birds so waterproof, should not have become so water-logged and sodden after it had lain for several minutes in the water as to render its rising and flight even more difficult than usual. The whole incident is especially interesting, as its narrator has observed, from its bearing on the much-discussed question whether it is possible that land birds can find rest on the water during a prolonged migration flight. If we could admit that this might be the case, the coming to this country of those occasional visitors, the American bittern and the Kildeer plover, would seem less miraculous; and it may be noted that both these birds are more or less akin to the woodcock. All are birds of something of the wading habit, lovers of damp places, so that they may be almost called semi-aquatic. Whatever its significance in regard to these larger questions, this actual fact of the woodcock's thus rising off the water is interesting enough, and sufficiently contrary to all expectation, in itself.